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Public Rallies for Police

In response to the anti-police rallies held across the country by radical, left wing extremists, more than 250 people attended a pro-police rally in Lowell last month to honor the service and sacrifices of our law enforcement officers.

PHOTO:RANDY HASKINS

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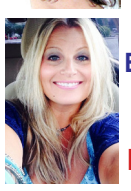

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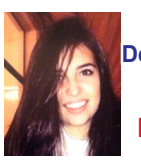

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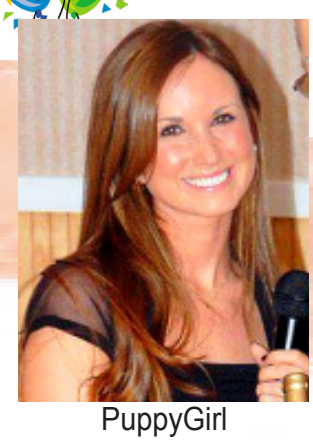

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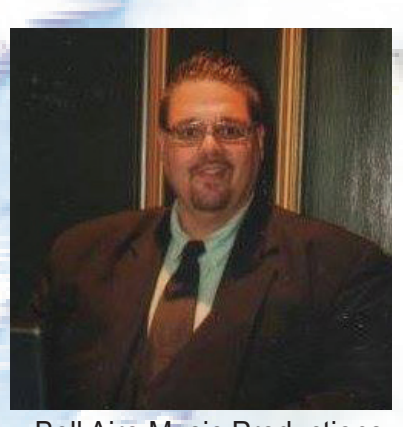

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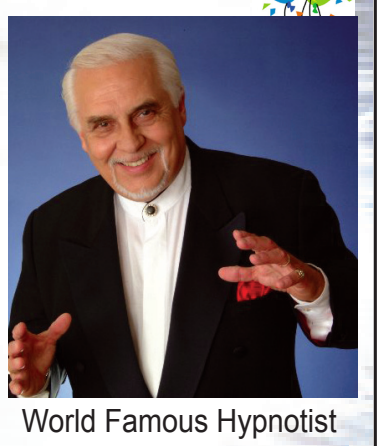

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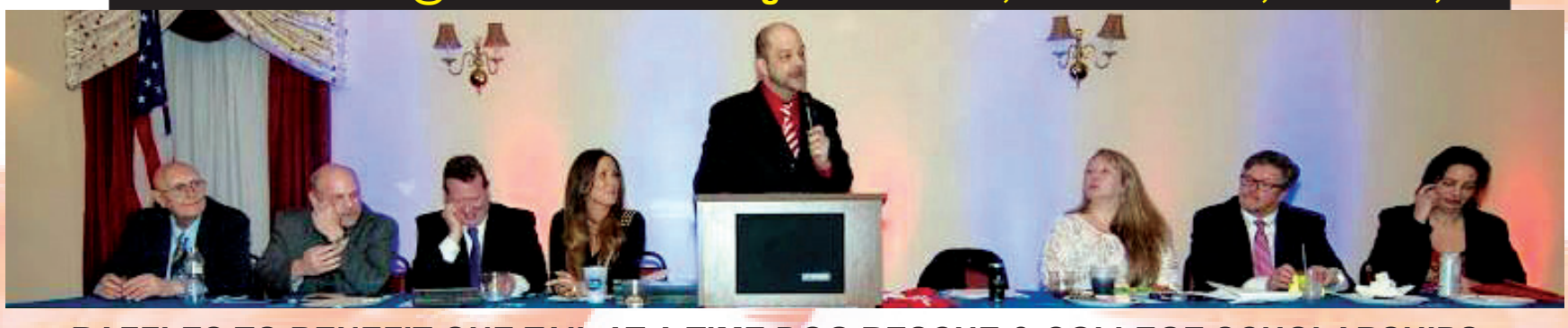

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Mayor Fiorentini Must Act on Police Station Mold

It seems hard to believe.

Since before the Haverhill Police Station was even occupied, concerns were raised about mold and mildew due to substandard construction work.

That was in 1999.

Today, 16 years later, Haverhill police officers and the civilians who work in that building continue to work in an unsafe environment.

We readily concede that Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini is not responsible for the $6.6M fraud that was committed by his predecessor Jim Rurak, when the police station was built and approved with all of these existing problems. Fiorentini, however, has been mayor for the last eight years and has done nothing about the black mold, leaking windows and unsafe health conditions that city workers must endure every day.

In the eight years since Jim Fiorentini has been mayor, dozens of complaints have been filed concerning the conditions of the police station and while Fiorentini had no problem advocating for a multi-million dollar tax override to fix the Hunking School, he still says he has no interest whatsoever in any kind of tax override to protect the lives of the men and women of the Haverhill Police Department.

When we asked Fiorentini about this he was adamant that he would not support an override to fix the station. He also pretended that he knew little, if anything at all, about the black mold and leaking problems at the Haverhill PD.

We find this unacceptable.

Haverhill police officers go out every single day and put their lives on the line to protect the public. But, when they return to the police station to write reports, book prisoners or question suspects, they put their health and lives at risk further because of the health hazards Fiorentini has refused to fix.

We also find it unacceptable that the Haverhill City Council has sat on their hands for the last fifteen years and done nothing to rectify this situation.

Even after our front page story last month called "$6.6M Police Station Fraud" where we detailed the shoddy work done by subcontractors and the health hazards the building continues to pose, Haverhill City Councilors have done nothing to address the problem, or even called out the mayor for his complicity in the situation.

It makes us wonder, and it should make you wonder too, what are Haverhill officials trying to hide?

It's bad enough that members of the public were ripped off when this building was constructed with no effective oversight by elected officials at the time. But it's even worse that all these years later, there is little interest by the current mayor and city council to fix the station.

We are tired of hearing the grandstanding and platitudes at election time when the mayor and city councilors campaign on "public safety" all the while they fully know, and have known for years, the serious nature of black mold at the Haverhill Police Station.

We believe it is time to stop paying lip service to the men and women of law enforcement who must breathe in the toxic mold every single day. It is time to stop ignoring the problem. It is time for the people of Haverhill to hold their elected officials accountable.

As we continue our series next month on the corruption involved with the construction of this building (and the apathy of the mayor and council), we demand Haverhill officials do their damned jobs. It's time they act as though all those fake campaign promises they made about public safety actually meant something.

So far, the silence has been deafening.

A Leader in the Corner Office - Jeff Katz

Somehow, some way we made it through a massive blizzard without once seeing Andrea Cabral or her waving fan. I don't how we did it, but we did. No, on second thought I know exactly how we did it. We elected serious, thoughtful adults to run the Commonwealth.

We've seen the first example of why my fellow Swampscotter Charlie Baker was elected Governor. He was cool, calm, collected and clearly in charge. There was nobody who watched him who could ever doubt that he was born to be anything other than an effective leader and efficient manager.

Politics aside, just about every time that I saw the former Governor on television I felt that he was always playing catch up. Deval Patrick struck me as someone who truly seemed to be befuddled by the most basic aspects of management. His answers were always to look for "firsts" but never, it seemed for "bests." He had the ability to inject partisanship into every situation whether it was required or not. He was able to target and label others as enemies, but clearly, getting people to pull together was above his pay grade.

Contrast that with Charlie Baker who has made it clear since his days on Swampscott Town Meeting and as a Swampscott Selectman that his concerns were bigger than himself. He had accomplished great things personally and had done well for his family. For many of us, that is enough. For some, the opportunity to serve and help others becomes a great motivator and that's clearly the case with our current Governor. We in Swampscott knew that he was someone to count on.

The knock on Charlie during his first campaign for the Corner Office was that he was too focused on details and not enough on glad-handing. It was a curious charge since anyone who's encountered him on a personal level knows that he's got a total grasp of the issues and the budget but also a great sense of humor and an appreciation for the rest of life from the Patriots to the Dropkick Murphys.

We've finally got a Governor who is not concerned with drapes or spending money we don't have to decorate an office we do have. We've got someone who has sought out the best people for the tasks at hand without regard to their political party or physical appearance.

Swampscott is the quintessential New England town. When people say, "you can't get there from here" they are usually sitting someplace in my town. Nonetheless, we're happy to share our guy with the rest of the Commonwealth. Oh, and you're welcome.

Jeff Katz is a former police officer, former talk show host on Talk1200AM and won the Associated Press Award for Best Talk Show in Boston two years in a row. He is now an exclusive columnist for The Valley Patriot. He is the recipient of The Valley Patriot's 2013 Editor's Choice Award for exceptional writing about issues that effect our lives. WEBSITE: visionaccomplished.net

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Things I Hate

Dr. Charles Ormsby
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

First and foremost, I hate innocent people being murdered.

Hopefully, even most Progressives will join me on that. Oh, I forget … they prefer to banish hate speech. So, I guess they don't hate innocent people being murdered … or they do hate the murder of innocents, but they just can't say it.

So, if asked their opinion of innocent people being murdered, do they just refuse to answer or do they lie? I'm sure glad I'm not a Progressive!

Hate is defined as the "intense or passionate dislike" of something.

Do Progressives not have an intense or passionate dislike for anything?

Of course they do. In fact they seem to have an intense dislike for many things.

Progressives passionately dislike anyone who is wealthy, especially those who have earned their wealth and who claim a right to it. They want the government to take the property of the wealthy by force – at the point of a gun if needed (taxes, the IRS, the police, etc. ; you get the picture).

Progressives have a passionate dislike for anyone who can prosper independent of the state and who wants to enjoy his individual liberties free of the statist controls the Progressives wish to impose.

Progressives share an intense dislike for those who claim the right to carry arms to defend themselves from anyone who would attack them or their family.

Progressives have an intense distaste for the Constitution. The Constitution is an inconvenient impediment to their programs that routinely violate the rights of those they seek to control.

Progressives experience a primordial rage when they think of the Tea Party. Why? Because Tea Party members respect those who work hard to create value, believe those who create value should own it, resist tax increases that exacerbate the state's violation of property rights, believe in the sanctity of the individual, resist the violations of individual sovereignty caused by excessive regulations, support the rights of individuals to defend themselves and their families, and support the Constitution because it provides the legal foundation for protecting individual rights against government intrusion.

Progressives are definitely haters. They hate all these things. They hate the Tea Party.

But let's not be unfair. The other side of hate is love, so Progressives are also lovers.

Progressives love taxes. They love government regulations. They love to steal the property of those who earned it. They love to tell others what they can and cannot do. They love people who will do what the government demands without questioning the government's coercion. They love it when people are dependent on the state for their sustenance and their protection. They love any politician or judge that seeks to weaken or destroy the Constitution. They love a president who ignores the Constitution and undermines it with his pen and his phone.

Progressives may not know it (although I believe many do), but they love fascism.

Progressives hate America, but they love tyranny.

All this brings me back to the original object of my hate: the murder of innocents. Progressives may think they share this hate, but the murder of innocents is precisely where their twisted philosophy leads. When such evil comes, they will deny responsibility, but they are responsible nevertheless.

Marx and Lenin may not have had murder as their fundamental goal, but they were primary contributors to the deaths of nearly 100 million innocents over the past century. Progressives, who are hardly proponents of "progress," should contemplate the holocaust they are brewing.

Yes, I am a hater too because there are many things I intensely and passionately dislike. But that also makes me a lover.

I love individual liberty which makes me hate tyranny and those that foster it.

I love the Constitution (especially as originally written) because it represents our best guard against the infringement of our liberties. I hate those who seek to destroy the Constitution either by ignoring its original intent or who seek to destroy its protections via amendments (as was done in 1913 with the 16th Amendment that established the income tax).

I love the Second Amendment because individual liberty, if it means anything, means that individuals have the right to defend their life and property. Prosecution of your murderer or the thief who stole your property is nice, but it doesn't substitute for an effective protection of your life and property before they are taken from you. How do you think I feel about those who seek to deny individuals the right to defend themselves?

I love those who fight against the theft of private property by the state. Those who constantly support a greater confiscation of private property are enemies of individual liberty. Many of those who constantly support such theft are both uninformed and thoughtless. As a minimum, they are deserving of our distain. But being ignorant is a choice; they are not innocent unless they are truly imbeciles. As much as I would like to suggest otherwise, few Democrats are truly imbeciles

I love those who create value through persistent hard work, those who respect the property rights of others, those who support their families, and those who gift their own property voluntarily when they feel a charitable urge.

Those who glorify dependency and encourage others to become or remain parasites dependent on property stolen by the state, undermine the values that made America great and are responsible for our decline. The decline they are fostering will ultimately result in the destruction of America and may foreshadow the destruction of human liberty all across the globe.

Here's a Rorschach test: Look at the nearby pictures of Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, Elizabeth Warren, and Hillary Clinton.

What emotion are you feeling?

Dr. Charles Ormsby served two terms on the North Andover School Committee, co-founded the North Andover Taxpayers Association, is a a co-founder of and columnist for The Valley Patriot, broadcasts weekly opinion pieces for WCAP (980 AM) in Lowell, and is a faculty member in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Dr. Ormsby is a graduate of Cornell and has a doctorate degree from MIT. You can email him at ccormsby@verizon.net

North Andover Firefighters of The Year

Nine members of the North Andover Fire Department were honored by the Lawrence Exchange Club last month.

Fire Chief Andrew Melnikas took to the podium and talked about why he nominated the firefighters for this annual award.

"The definition of the word 'Brotherhood' as defined by the Free Dictionary is an association of men and women, such as a fraternity or Union, united for a common goal. Firefighters are a brotherhood and one of their common or unspoken purposes or goals is the saving of lives, while often times putting their own lives in the path of danger.

This brotherhood was never more evident than in the early morning hours of May 3, 2014. At that time, Engine # 2 and Ambulance # 2 were dispatched to the area of # 585 Sharpeners Pond Rd. for a reported motor vehicle accident with personal injury. Within minutes, both responding units were on the scene.

Upon arrival, Lt. Beirne and his crew, found a vehicle, off the road, upright, with the driver's side resting against several trees. One of the victims was conscious and crawling along the ground. A second victim was found, unconscious, lying on the ground in a ditch with shallow, labored breathing.

Lt. Beirne noticed that, as a result of the extensive damage to the vehicle, the gas tank had ruptured, leaking fuel onto and around the second victim. In addition, there were arcing wires in close proximity to the accident scene. Taking all of these factors into account the Lieutenant called for additional manpower and as a result Ladder # 1 was dispatched.

The crew of Ambulance # 2 with the assistance of the Paramedic Unit quickly yet carefully secured the seriously injured victim to the long backboard and removed him from the hazard. An additional ambulance was called to the scene to treat the first victim.

Due to the injuries to the unconscious victim the decision was made by the Paramedic Unit to Request Medflight and the landing zone was set up on the playing fields on Sharpners Pond Rd. The unconscious and critically injured victim was then transported to a Boston Hospital. As I was to learn in the following days, for Lt Beirne, and his crew, this was truly a lifesaving emergency.

The following Monday we learned that the critically injured person was a member of the Firefighter Brotherhood, a Burlington Firefighter. As a result of the accident, he had suffered several life threatening injuries. His Fire Chief had communicated to the Burlington Town Administrator that the reason the firefighter is alive and recovering from those injuries was a direct result of actions that the North Andover Fire Department performed at the scene. It is a result of their efforts on that evening that I have nominated Lt. Mike Beirne, Lt. Graham Rowe, FFs John McClellan, Matt Twiss, Dan Pas, Dan Ryan, Steve Risacher, Blake Zwinggi, and Neil Patnaude for the firefighter of the year award.

At this time I would ask that Burlington Firefighter, Gerry Letendre, please approach the podium and assist me in the presentation of the awards."

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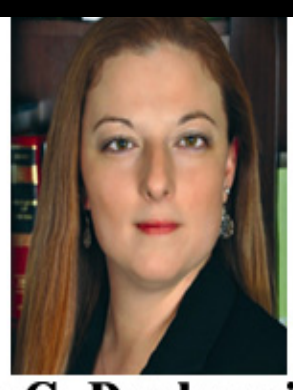

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DeCologero Runs for Selectman

NORTH ANDOVER

Phil DeCologero
CANDIDATE FOR N.A. SELECTMAN

On March 31st, voters will cast their ballots to fill two seats on the North Andover Board of Selectmen, including one being vacated by Bill Gordon, who has very capably served our town for the past six years. My name is Phil DeCologero and I am writing to respectfully ask for your vote to fill this seat.

North Andover is important to me. I grew up down the street from the Stevens Memorial Library, went to our public schools, spent my teenage years working at the old North Andover Star Market, and then put myself through Merrimack College. This town is my home, and that's why my wife and I couldn't imagine buying a house or raising our daughter anywhere else.

Living in North Andover has instilled me with a strong belief in serving our community. When I was a student at North Andover High School, I volunteered at St. Michael Church and the North Andover Historical Society. While at Merrimack College I interned for one of our state legislators, and then worked on our town's behalf at the Massachusetts State House. Most recently, I served in the executive offices of municipal government, and this fall I joined Fisher College as Assistant Director of Admissions.

I have always endeavored to give back to our town. In 2008, I was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to the North Andover Sustainability Committee. Most important to me, in 2009 I helped bring business owners together as a co-founder of the North Andover Merchants Association. In 2012, I was recognized by local business owners as the North Andover Merchant Association Volunteer of the Year. That same year I was honored to be included in the Merrimack Valley Business Magazine's "40 under 40" – a list of 40 people under the age of 40 from across our region who stood out for their work in business, education, government, and community service.

Supporting our small businesses has always been a passion of mine – a passion rooted in a firm belief that our town's success is directly tied to a healthy and prosperous business community. I will bring this passion to the Board of Selectmen and work with our local and state officials to support existing businesses while also encouraging responsible economic growth.

Supporting the needs of our citizens is not possible without good communication. As Selectman, I will strive to always keep open lines of communication between our Board of Selectman, townspeople and other local officials. Further, I will work cooperatively with our state legislators – people who are necessary partners in moving our town forward.

Responsiveness, accessibility, and transparency are all essential to the role of Selectman. It will be the hallmark of my service should I have the fortune to be elected. Our current board has worked to meet these expectations, and I am dedicated to building upon this commitment.

I ask for one of your two votes for Selectman because my service in state and local government has given me the skills to be an effective advocate for the people who call North Andover home. I have actively served this community for the last 10 years and my public and private sector experience gives me the perspective to be a fair and thoughtful voice for all residents. I look forward to the opportunity to earn your vote.

TOWN ELECTIONS ARE MARCH 31ST IN NORTH ANDOVER

Veteran Organizations Fight for Relevancy

Oscar Camargo
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Veteran organizations like the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion are experiencing a decline in membership. In fact, membership in the VFW has been steadily shrinking for 22 years straight. Despite over a decade's worth of conflict, newer veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns are simply not joining. Why?

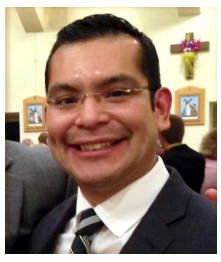
There's a negative impression among newer veterans that organizations like the VFW are out of touch. Images that float into people's minds are that of a smoke-filled room lined with unwelcoming faces guzzling alcohol. This is a depressing image and there are VFW posts where that would be an accurate assessment; however, this impression is also a dangerous one.

The fact is organizations like the VFW are the best equipped to advocate at the state and federal level ensuring veterans receive the benefits they've earned. In essence, they have the political clout to help veterans navigate the bureaucracy of the Department of Veterans Affairs. This ability would be severely diminished if veteran organizations do not seize opportunities and adopt different strategies to engage newer veterans.

This new generation of veterans want to be actively involved in their communities in a manner not previously done before. Whether it's starting a running club, volunteering their skills to emergency services, or working with civilians to help other veterans reintegrate after serving abroad. The ability to remain relevant and active is the driving force motivating newer veterans. There's no reason why veteran organizations like the VFW or the American Legion cannot adapt.

As a veteran and officer at the VFW Post 2014 in North Andover, I've had the privilege of working with fellow veterans who've had the same passion and desire continue to serve their community beyond their military service. We've actively sought to dispel the negative impressions I mentioned above, but we can and should do more.

Our post, like others across the country, is fighting to remain relevant, but we're a resilient lot unwilling to simply fade away. Our strength comes from our members, but our relevancy comes from caring for our community.



Oscar Camargo is a veteran and former candidate for State Rep. He can be reached at followcamargo@gmail.com or follow him on Twitter at @followcamargo.

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North Andover Senior Center Activities & Announcements

WINTER HEATING SAFETY

The recent extremely cold temperatures have demonstrated the potential dangers associated with utilizing 'alternative' methods to heat your home, particularly if you lose your primary heating source due to a power outage or to lack of fuel. Home fires occur more in winter than in any other season. Many of these home fires are caused by the improper use of space heaters, as well as fireplaces and wood stoves. The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) advises the following heating and carbon monoxide tips to help stay safe this winter season:

Portable Heaters

• Only use portable heaters from a recognized testing laboratory.

• Make sure the heater has an automatic shut-off so if it tips over, it shuts off.

• Keep anything that can burn such as bedding, clothing and curtains at least three feet away from the heater.

• Plug portable heaters directly into outlets. Never plug a portable heater into an extension cord or power strip.

• Turn heaters off when going to bed or leaving the room.

Fireplaces

• Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace to prevent embers or sparks jumping out.

• Do not burn paper in the fireplace.

• Put the fire out before going to sleep or leaving the home.

• Put ashes in a metal container with a lid, outside, at least three feet from the home.

Wood Stoves

• Have the chimney inspected and cleaned each year by a professional.

• Make sure the wood stove is three feet away from anything that can burn.

• Do not burn paper in the wood stove.

• Put the fire out before going to sleep or leaving the home.

Carbon Monoxide

• When using heaters that require fuel, install a carbon monoxide detector.

Courtesy of: Peter W. Judge, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Support is being offered by the North Andover Senior Center for all the residents of Foulds Terrace. If you would like more information please call the North Andover Senior Center and ask for Donna. 978 688-9560.

ONE-ON-ONE COMPUTER INSTRUCTION: 45 minute sessions for $7. Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-12 with George Chory. Make your appointments with reception 978-688-9560. This time can accommodate gadgets, too if necessary (Phones, Tablets, etc.)

S.H.I.N.E. Volunteers: (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Free, confidential counseling on all aspects of health insurance to North Andover residents on Medicare; Call center for an appointment. First and third Tuesday of the month.

Volunteers are the backbone of the North Andover Senior Center. We currently need Medical Transport Volunteers. You can set your own hours. Call the Senior Center for more information. Speak with our Program Coordinator at 688-9560 for application and assistance.

NEWS & VIEWS: Every Wednesday at 10–11:30. Come and join in the lively discussion of current events, politics, history and you never know what else?!

MEET WITH AN ATTORNEY: Atty. Ramsey Bahrawy, Feb 17th. Schedule with Reception-first consult is free.

MR. FIX IT: First and Third THURSDAY of the month from 12-3pm. Feb 19th. We repair almost as good as new. Lamps, with cords and sockets, replace watch batteries, small tables and chairs. Anything that is not listed, we will give it a shot! Your cost is $2 - $4 depending on work needed, plus parts. Proceeds benefit the Senior Center.

Mayor Rivera Announces Selection for New Fire Chief from Haverhill

Following a five-month nationwide, public search process conducted by a team of nine community members, Mayor Daniel Rivera today announced his selection for Chief of the Lawrence Fire Department, and tomorrow will submit the candidacy of Haverhill Senior Deputy Fire Chief and United States Air Force Veteran Brian Moriarty to the Lawrence City Council for review and confirmation.

Deputy Fire Chief Moriarty came out on top of a highly competitive pool of applicants for the position. Deputy Fire Chief Moriarty brings to the Lawrence Fire Department over thirty years of experience in fire service and twenty-seven years as a paramedic. "Brian Moriarty is a proven leader and will be a tremendous asset to the Lawrence Fire Department, if confirmed," said Mayor Dan Rivera. "He is well-respected in the fire service community and I am confident that the City Council will see his experience has prepared him to successfully lead our department. I am excited to be able to bring Deputy Fire Chief Moriarty's energy and leadership to the hardworking men and women of the Lawrence Fire Department."

Deputy Fire Chief Moriarty began his firefighting career in 1980 as a crash and structural firefighter for the United States Air Force. Upon retirement from the Air Force, Brian joined the Haverhill Fire Department as a firefighter in 1987. Rising through the ranks, Deputy Fire Chief Moriarty was promoted to Lieutenant in 1993, Captain in 1998, Deputy Fire Chief of Fire Prevention is 2003, and Senior Deputy Fire Chief in 2010, a position that he holds today. "Brian Moriarty is a career firefighter who has risen through the ranks and perfected his skills over the years," said Retired Lawrence Fire Chief and Fire Chief Search Committee member Richard Shafer. "I have no doubt that Brian is the candidate Lawrence needs; his experience and educations speaks for itself."

Deputy Fire Chief Moriarty's knowledge of Lawrence's streets, people and the firefighting challenges it faces; which he gathered through his long history providing mutual aid from Haverhill, and as a paramedic in Lawrence; will insure a smooth transition into the position. "What drew me to Brian was his combined knowledge of emergency response and his familiarity with the Lawrence community," said Lawrence resident, business owner and Fire Chief Search Committee member Cesar Camargo-Sanchez. "His work as a paramedic has led to an established relationship with both the Fire Department and residents of Lawrence. He is an outstanding selection for our new Fire Chief."

North Andover Fire Chief Andrew Melnikas worked with Moriarty while performing ambulatory duties, as well as on mutual aid fire scenes. Melnikas offered, "Mr. Moriarty is the epitome of a team player. He is willing to listen to opposing views and discuss the merits of the same, realizing that, in the end, we are all working towards the same goal."

William Moynihan, retired Chief of Probation at the Haverhill District Court and Chair of the Board of Trustees for Northern Essex Community College, offered a stellar recommendation on behalf of Moriarty: "He has immense dedication to his profession as a firefighter. He goes the extra mile to be the very best he can be in his beloved field of fire science, and goes above and beyond in his training as a paramedic, showing great compassion for the sick, injured and anyone in need of assistance."

Deputy Fire Chief Brian Moriarty has received numerous awards throughout his career including Firefighter of the Year in 1995, Citation of Valor in 2003 and Paramedic of the Year in 2013. In addition to his professional experience, Deputy Fire Chief Brian Moriarty holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Fire and Emergency Management from Rivier College, an Executive Fire Officer Certificate in Fire Service Management from the National Fire Academy, an Associate's Degree in Fire Science from the Community College of the Air Force, and a Paramedic License

FIRE CHIEF: PAGE: 25

Patrolman Carl Farrington Named Police Officer of the Year

Last month, Lawrence Police Officer Carl Farrington was awarded the Lawrence Exchange Club Police Officer of the Year and was presented his award by Police Chief Fitzpatrick.

Chief Fitzpatrick took to the microphone to explain why Farrington was this year's recipient. The annual event took place at the Wyndham Hotel in Andover in a room of more than 300 police officers, firefighters and EMTs from Lawrence, Andover and North Andover.

"On Monday, January 27, 2014 at approximately 8:11pm, Lawrence Police Officer Carl Farrington responded to 17 Worsock Terrace to assist the Lawrence Fire Department who was responding to a working fire at that location.

Upon arrival, Officer Farrington encountered an elderly gentleman who informed him that his son was on the second floor of the residence. Officer Farrington instructed the elderly gentleman to evacuate the dwelling and proceeded to the second floor.

When reaching the second floor of the dwelling, Officer Farrington encountered thick black smoke. Shortly thereafter, he located the elderly gentleman's son, who was later identified as Thomas Doyle, age 54. Officer Farrington instructed Mr. Doyle to follow him down the stairs, at which point Mr. Doyle appeared to be confused and frightened, stopping in place and grasping the handrail of the staircase.

In an attempt to remove the man from the house, Officer Farrington pulled Mr. Dole to the ground and proceeded to carry him down the smoke filled staircase on his back.

When reaching the bottom of the stairs, Officer Farrington was met by Deputy Fire Chief John McInnis, along with other members of the Lawrence Fire Department who assisted in pulling Mr. Doyle to safety.

Deputy McInnis later credited Officer Farrington with saving the life of Mr. Doyle. Officer Farrington was transported to Lawrence General Hospital where we was treated for smoke inhalation and released.

Mr. Doyle was transported to Lawrence General and then airlifted to Massachusetts General Hospital.

Upon recovering, Mr. Doyle came to the police station and personally thanked Officer Farrington for saving his life.

The actions of Officer Farrington are in accordance with the finest traditions of the Lawrence Police Department, and it is my pleasure to award him with the Lawrence Exchange Club Police Office of the Year."

Lawrence Exchange Club Honors 7 Lawrence Firefighters for Heroism in Kingston St. Fire

The Lawrence Exchange Club honored seven Lawrence firefighters for heroism and bravery in connection with their actions at a 4-alarm fire on 30 Kingston Street where two young boys died and two firefighters were injured.

Deputy Fire Chief Brian Murphy explained to the audience of more than 300 police, firefighters and EMT's from Lawrence, Andover and North Andover.

"On October 21, 2014 at 3:40am the Lawrence Fire Department responded to a 3 story, 6 apartment, wood frame structure fire. On arrival, heavy fire had control of all three floors and was shooting high above the roofline in the rear of the structure. The fire had already extended onto the cockloft, with fully one half of this attic area heavily involved in fire. Heavy black smoke was pouring out of every opening in this building. Fire crews were notified that two young boys had not made it out of the building and were trapped on the third floor.

Engine 9's crew stretched a 1-¾ attack line to the front hallway and started advancing the line up the stairwell to the third floor.

Ladder 4's crew entered this hallway and began searching for the trapped boys as they made their way up the stairwell.

The rescue crew also entered the hallway and started searching.

Fire crews were met with extremely high heat conditions and heavy smoke conditions as soon as they entered the stairwell. The rescue crew attempted to locate a rear stairway through the first floor apartment. As they made their way through the first floor they were met with a wall of flames that was advancing from the rear of the building towards the front of the building.

The fire crews continued to advance as far as they could through deteriorating conditions of extreme heat and heavy smoke – even as the flames continued to spread on every floor. As fire crews exited the building their turnout gear was smoking from the high heat conditions that were encountered. During the search, Firefighter Mark Verville broke his foot and sustained a serious ankle and knee injury and Captain Kevin Loughlin received burns on his face.

This fire was very difficult.

This is the most fire I have ever witnessed on arrival at a fully occupied building in my 35-year career.

The two young boys, 4-year-old Jean Carlos Merrero Santiago and 9-year-old Kelvin Medina succumbed to the fire and didn't make it out of the building alive.

Ultimately, we only have control of the effort we put forth.

The efforts put forth by the following firefighters was in the highest tradition of the Lawrence Fire Department.

Engine 9: Captain Kevin Loughlin, and Firefighters Mark Verville and Diogenes Blanco.

Ladder 4: Lt. Joseph Murhpy and Firefighter Sean Sullivan.

Rescue: Lt. James Driscol and Firefighter Juan Gonzales."

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Kathy's Lawrence Notebook

Kathy Runge
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I started writing this at the height of the Blizzard of 2015 and couldn't help but wonder why the City Council didn't convene an emergency meeting and set up a central command in their chambers. Then they could have held a vote of no confidence in the mayor the minute they decided his storm response was inadequate.

The council's no confidence vote didn't happen at the meeting of January 13. They had an executive session for two hours and immediately tabled the document. The audience was in disbelief.

They had another crack at it a week later, when Councilor Twomey moved to take the infamous document off the table and no one would second it. Where were the disgruntled councilors? I guess they realize that the threat of the vote is what's important; once the vote is taken the drama will be over and the councilors will have to account for their choices. That doesn't sound likely. If the councilors don't have the backbone to vote on this resolution then they should withdraw it.

Let me be clear. I think Mayor Rivera has made mistakes. I know Mayor Lantigua made mistakes. It is my belief that on the whole, Mayor Rivera's mistakes are less felonious than Lantigua's were. Any councilor who doesn't agree that both mayors made mistakes is fooling themselves. In my opinion, any councilor that sat silently during Mayor Lantigua's administration has no right to be considering a no confidence vote now.

Mayor Rivera should remember that Mayor Lantigua had four years of attorneys telling him that his actions were illegal. That didn't make any difference to Lantigua, but now he has a long list of things that mayors are not allowed to do and his flunkies will hold the current mayor accountable.

The City Council routinely violates their own rules and, by their own admission, violates the Open Meeting Law (OML). They do all this while complaining that the Mayor doesn't follow the laws. Too bad Mayor Rivera can't suspend the rules so easily.

This writer filed a formal complaint alleging that the council violated the OML at their January 13 meeting. They went into executive session without recording a roll call vote as required, having a roll call vote to go into and one to come out of executive session afterwards. The OML also requires the anticipated topics of the executive session to be listed on the agenda and given verbally, which was violated.

Documents must be named in such a way so that a reasonable person could read the title and deduce the topics to be discussed. The "no confidence" document that allegedly contains information regarding lawsuits and potential lawsuits by former employees is titled "Request for the attendance of Mayor Rivera before City Council - RE: function, powers, authority, and duties within the scope of the Office of Mayor. Executive Session possible." Another epic fail by those who should know better. Since my complaint "Vote of No Confidence of Mayor pending" has been appended to the document. Updates on the complaints progress will be forthcoming,

In other news, after months of drama, the council finally approved the loan for new police cruisers, license plate scanners, and a ladder truck for the Fire Department at the January 13 meeting. Councilor Laplante discussed limitations on the use and storage of data obtained by the scanners. Councilor Almonte voted against the loan. I hope she at least got the numbers straight by then.

Council President Maldonado lamented that we will need our free cash to pay expensive legal settlements, so that's why he was voting to allow the loan. According to Council's own rules, the President isn't supposed to argue for or against an issue unless he gives the chair to the Vice President for the duration of the discussion. Oh well, no big deal for the Council President. The rules are for other people to follow.

On January 20, viewers sat through an excruciating hour long discussion of whether to accept a $3.9 million grant that will improve Merrimack Street, discussing parking, the cost of electricity for traffic signals, traffic flow, other areas of the city needing attention, and skateboarders. Councilor Twomey spoke about the potential impact on parking, which is a legitimate concern that I hope will be addressed as the project develops. Councilor Almonte didn't think we should foot the electric bill for the traffic signals.

The Community Development Department has been working on this grant proposal for a year. If the Council is going to think about nixing grants that we've been paying employees and outside contractors to work on for that long, maybe they shouldn't worry about the cost of operating traffic signals. The acceptance of the grant passed with Councilors Twomey and Almonte voting against it.

If anyone's looking for a substitute for waterboarding, just get a few DVDs of the Lawrence City Council and your prisoners will be talking in no time.

Senator Tarr Announces 2015-2016 GOP State Senate Leadership Posts

With the 189th Legislative Session underway, Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) announces the following Republican leadership posts for the 2015-2016 legislative session:

• Senator Robert Hedlund (R-Weymouth) has been appointed to serve as an Assistant Senate Minority Leader for the third consecutive legislative term. He has also been appointed to serve as the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Rules;

• Senator Richard Ross (R-Wrentham) has also been appointed to serve as an Assistant Senate Minority Leader, which will mark the first time he's been appointed to that leadership position. He has also been appointed to serve as the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Ethics. Previously, Senator Ross held the position of Minority Whip and has served as the Ranking Member of the Minority Party of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means;

• Senator Donald Humason (R-Westfield) has been appointed to serve as the Senate Minority Whip for the second consecutive legislative session;

• Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Webster), who joined the caucus this legislative session after serving two terms as a member of the House of Representatives, has been appointed to serve as the Assistant Minority Whip; and

• Senator Vinny deMacedo (R-Plymouth), who also joined the caucus this legislative session after serving 16 years in the House of Representatives, has been appointed to serve as the Ranking Member of the Minority Party of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. Senator deMacedo will bring his expertise to the committee, since he had previously served as the Ranking Member for the Minority Party when he served in the House of Representatives.

"We are fortunate to have a caucus comprised of hard-working, articulate, and resourceful members from geographically diverse parts of our state," said Senator Tarr. "Through their various roles in positions of leadership, I'm confident they will make a real difference in meeting the challenges we face now and in the future."

After being elected unanimously by the members of the Senate Republican Caucus, Senator Tarr will again lead the caucus for his third consecutive term. Senator Tarr will also serve as the Ranking Member on Bills in Third Reading.

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Pro-Police Rally Draws 250 to say THANK YOU!

More than 250 people braved the sub-freezing January temperatures last month to gather outside the Lowell Police Department and thank the men and women of Law Enforcement for their dedication and sacrifices.

Waving signs that said "Police Lives Matter" and "We Love Our Police", a diverse crowd from all across Massachusetts and New Hampshire gathered near the memorial of slain Lowell Police Officer Christos Rousses to show their support for law enforcement officers across the country.

After months of nationwide rallies against police, where the media and radical left wing extremists labeled and stereotyped cops as racist thugs out to gun down young black men: pro-police rally organizers said it was time that the silent majority stood up, and sent a strong message to the cop hating news media and the political agitators who attack the police.

WE HAVE YOUR BACK

WCAP morning host and owner of the Athenian Corner, Teddy Panos told the cheering crowd, "For far too long we stood on the sidelines letting others dictate the discussions, all the while, the men and women in blue have had our backs. Well, today we say to you we have your backs! We will no longer stand by and let what you do go unnoticed or be tarnished."

Military veteran, WCAP radio host, and local author John MacDonald expressed his frustration at the news media deceptions about police officers in the recent "black lives matter" propaganda campaign.

"May the police protesters and TV news media outlets across the country, motivated solely on misinformation, hate, or discouragement because of incidents in Ferguson MO, or in New York City... may they hear our voice, hear our chants and see our signs! Let them see that here in Lowell ,Massachusetts we came together peacefully and we were legally permitted," a reference to the fact that none of the anti-police protests across the country were legal yet allowed to take place without the required permits.

"The next time we hear someone say 'black lives matter' say yes, yes they do. Black lives matter, all lives matter, American lives matter, and law enforcement lives matter as well."

EVERY 58 HOURS

Christine Morabito of Haverhill, (who not only helped organize the rally, but purchased the balloons, signs and buttons for the rally out of her pocket) spoke of the sacrifices of police officers as the frigid cold brought the crowd closer together.

"The sacrifice we made [coming here] today pales in comparison to the sacrifice that the men and women in blue sacrifice every single day, you all get that, and that's why you are here. 126 police officers died last year in the line of duty. According to the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial Fund, on average one officer is killed somewhere in the United States every 58 hours. Those are sobering statistics. And with the recent attacks and threats against police, that profession just got a little more dangerous. To the men and women out there in uniform, we are humbled by your service. You are braver than most of us can ever imagine being."

"I get it, because I belong to a profession where no matter how well trained you are, it is still never easy to run toward danger - a profession that doesn't allow you to unsee a fatal accident victim, or an abused spouse, or a neglected child."

~Retired Dracut Police Officer Tony Archinski

"I just want to close with one thing. We are told all the time not to judge someone by the color of their skin. I would like to suggest that by the same token, we not judge someone by the color of their uniform."

Lowell's first lady Laurie Elliott also thanked the crowd on behalf of the mayor who was in Vietnam with councilor Rita Mercier. Elliott was one of the original organizers of the event.

Many politicians who were told they could not speak at the rally chose not to attend but many others did, including State Reps. Tom Golden (D-Lowell), Colleen Garry (D-Dracut), Marcos Devers (D-Lawrence) and Diana DiZoglio (D-Methuen), State Senator Eileen Donaohue (D-Lowell) and several local councilors, selectmen and school committee members.

"I just wanted to be here to support the police officers, I don't need any recognition and I don't need to speak on the program," Lawrence State Representative Marcos Devers said after the rally.

"This is not about me," Methuen Rep. Diana DiZoglio agreed. "I'm here to support the cops and the sacrifices they make. I don't need to speak or be recognized that's not why I'm here."

BECAUSE HE GETS IT

"Now I know I said no politicians were going to speak today but I made one exception," rally organizer and Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan said from the microphone.

"That exception is Dracut Selectman Tony Archinski because he is a retired police officer and he truly gets it," Duggan added.

"I'm a retired police officer and when police survivor, Tom Duggan, first called me to ask me to speak today he told me that he chose me because I've done the job, and I get it," Archinski said. Organizer, Tom Duggan's father was a Lawrence Police Officer beaten to death with a baseball bat in 1990 by a man from Lowell.

Archinski talked about his thoughts about being a Dracut police officer.

"I get it because I know many of these men and women who have chosen a profession [where] the main goal is to help

RALLY: PAGE 20

Lowell's Own Anthony Bourdain

Wine Novice Blogger, Jim Campanini

John MacDonald
VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST

Some of us are familiar with the numerous television shows, books and magazine articles of the culinary adventurist Anthony Bourdain. Bourdain is an articulate communicator that transports the viewer or reader, though the back streets and rarely seen parts of the world, while showcasing the culinary specialties that these places offer. As Bourdain navigates the narrow walkways of almost anywhere in the world he mesmerizes you, while describing the local people, sounds and smells of the locations he has found. All the while, often just sitting on an old milk crate, feeding a stray cat and dining in an open-air café. Bourdain walks with swagger, is grungy, his clothes scream for an iron and his hair a barber. He's Indiana Jones with a spoon and I love it.

Lowell has its own version of Anthony Bourdain, but showered. This man I speak of is the writer of Wine Novice blog, Jim Campanini. The comparison between Bourdain and Campanini might not be obvious upon first glance, but the common thread these two have is quite striking. While Bourdain might travel more often and to much more exotic locations, Jim takes you to lesser known parts of the United States, Italy or even locally in Lowell, showcasing his latest find in wines. Jim describes the locations he travels and the people whom he meets with his own unique literary prose. Whether it be a past trip to Italy, Walla Walla, Washington or meeting a specialty wine purveyor like Drew Bledsoe, Jim transports you. He feeds the curiosity and the soul of any wine enthusiast or casual observer seeking a little adventure.

Jim Campanini, the description of the people he meets and where he meets them often reminds me of the late great sports writer Dick Schaap. Schaap a New Yorker who had a passion for people and their stories, met them weekly while he was alive, at the legendary restaurant Rao's in East Harlem. Schaap was renowned for the stories he told from the regular table he reserved at Rao's. Jim like Schaap, meets people, listens intently and shares his passionate palate for wines and the food that may compliment them, usually at his favorite Lowell hangout on Gorham Street … Ricardo's. In a way, Jim through his writing has helped Ricardo's become a bit legendary in its own right. Read the Wine Novice blog and you'll understand why.

Wine Novice Blogger
Jim Campanini

Romeo had Juliet and Frankie had Johnnie. Of all the adventures Jim takes, wines he reviews and people he meets, all take a back seat in comparison to the Wine Goddess. The Wine Goddess, Mrs. Campanini is what I would describe from reading the Wine Novice, is Jim's true north. Every adventure, mishap or needed advice, comes from his faithful sidekick and fellow novice wine connoisseur, the Wine Goddess. Her interesting observations seemingly keep Jim on his toes and provide him a companion in content, throughout their adventures.

So for those of you who have not found the Wine Novice (http://blogs.lowellsun.com/winenovice), I encourage you to do so. Adventures await you as well as the discovery of our own local Anthony Bourdain. However, unlike Bourdain, Jim is accessible. Unlike Bourdain, you may just run into Jim on a downtown street or in a local restaurant. And unlike Anthony Bourdain, Jim is showered and usually sporting one of his numerous ties, which is another story for another day.

Seek the Wine Novice. It's your passport and adventure awaits…

John MacDonald is the President/CEO of Big Decisions, LLC, which is a management consulting business that concentrates on offering strategic advice on Marketing, Public Relations, Economic/ Business Development and Social Media. John has a long career of success, achieving record results in the communications field and spending over 20 years managing marketing budgets, driving the bottom line in the financial services, restaurant, retail and real estate industries.

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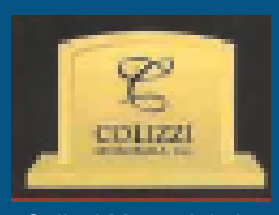

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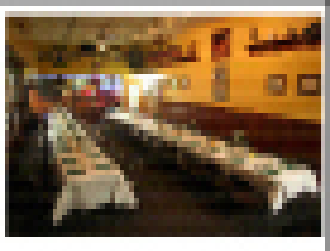

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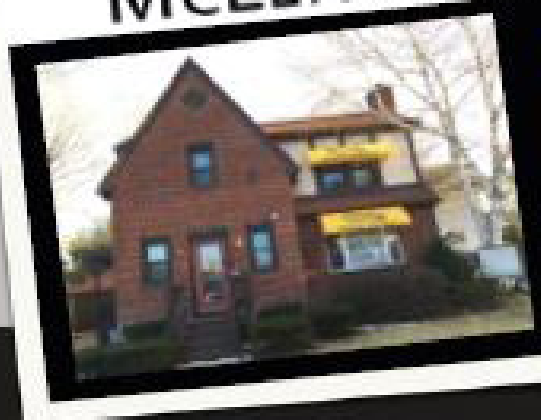

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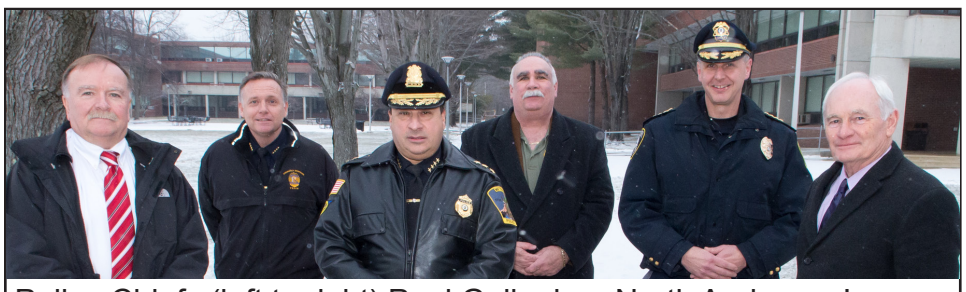

Police Chiefs (left to right) Paul Gallagher, North Andover, James Fitzpatrick, Lawrence, Joe Solomon, Methuen, Alan DiNaro, Haverhill, Kevin Ouellet, Amesbury, and George Moriarty, NECC executive director of workforce and corporate relations

State Police Recruit Training Academy Opens on NECC's Haverhill Campus

Beginning in February, Northern Essex Community College's Haverhill Campus will be home to the state's newest Police Recruit Officer Training Academy, which will provide training for recruits who will be joining local police departments.

There are currently academies located in other areas of the state, but not in the upper Merrimack Valley, according to George Moriarty, NECC's director of workforce development and corporate education.

"Local police chiefs were experiencing enrollment backlogs at the existing academies," said Moriarty. "And they approached the college about starting an academy in Haverhill."

Recruits go through an intensive training program that meets daily Monday through Friday for 25 weeks. Training focuses on constitutional law, prevention and intervention, community policing, domestic violence, elder abuse, victims' rights, and other topics. All training will take place on the Haverhill Campus except for firearms training and emergency driving techniques, which will be held at off-campus locations.

Northern Essex will manage the Academy, and an Advisory Board appointed by President Glenn will provide oversight and technical guidance. The Advisory Board will be comprised of chiefs of police from area cities and towns, including Amesbury, Haverhill, Methuen, Lawrence, and North Andover. It is anticipated that two classes of 50 students each will graduate from the Academy each year.

Haverhill Police Chief Alan DeNaro says the Merrimack Valley has needed a regional police academy for over 25 years. "By partnering with NECC, we will be able to more quickly and efficiently train our new recruits as they embark on their chosen profession. I am confident that this endeavor will become a catalyst for other regional training programs for law enforcement throughout the Commonwealth."

Northern Essex has a long and successful history of providing professional education and training for a number of fields, including education, health care, and law enforcement. The college offers an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice, in which close to 400 students are enrolled, and a Certificate in Law Enforcement. Graduates of the new Academy will be encouraged to continue their education at the college.

"Educating our police officers has never been more important," said Moriarty. "We've offered criminal justice programs for many years and we're excited to be expanding our role in educating the next generation of officers."

For more information about the Police Recruit Training Academy, contact Moriarty at gmoriarty@necc.mass.eduor 978 659-1224.

L-R: Reps Denise Provost, Linda Dean Campbell, Senator Linda Dorcena Forry, Governor Charlie Baker and Rep Kay Kahn.

Legislation that Hits Home Targets the Opiate Crisis

Linda Dean Campbell
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Filing legislation that is both applicable to the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts but also very much needed in the Merrimack Valley is often a great challenge. The legislation which I will file in this coming session targets the opiate crisis facing us and should be a great help both close to home and throughout the Commonwealth.

Most of the hard work of drafting proposals was accomplished by our District Attorneys, who have been steadily advocating for positive action for quite some time. Our tipping point was reached when our already serious opiate problem became a full-fledged crisis over the past year and a half.

The first measure shall require hospitals to report drug overdose deaths immediately to the police so that positive enforcement countermeasures may be undertaken in a timely manner to prevent other injuries or deaths. The report shall be made to the Colonel of the State Police and to the Police Chief of the town where the health facility is located.

Currently, reports of overdose to include opiate related deaths are made periodically to the Department of Health only for policy development, and this does very little to prevent further deaths or injuries where we all live.

Some worry about privacy concerns, but I disagree. No names will be used in the reporting by hospitals to local enforcement - only numbers.

The second piece of legislation that I have filed on behalf of District Attorneys is a bit more controversial, but very much needed. It will update the state's wiretapping laws to include cell phones to help law enforcement target drug gangs and human traffickers. Having the intersection of Interstates 495, 93, and 95, this update is particularly important to the suppression of trafficking in the Merrimack Valley and throughout Essex County.

The federal law has been updated, but the Massachusetts law has not been changed since the era of rotary dial phones.

The law requires that law enforcement go before a judge to demonstrate probable cause for warrants to wiretap specific cell phones for a set amount of time. They must return to the judge if they wish to extend the period of wiretap.

I am hopeful that this legislation will be signed by the Governor in this session. Last session, a version was passed by the Legislature, but not signed by the Governor. Attorney General Healy has indicated she will consider supporting an update to this law, so I remain hopeful.

I have filed other legislation which can be viewed at: www.statereplindacampbell.com

Rep Campbell can be reached at Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov/617.722.2305

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Thoughts from Councilor #5

Public Participation

Daniel Grayton
METHUEN CITY COUNCILOR

One of the first agenda items at every city council meeting is public participation, a time where anyone can come speak before the council about any issue, whether it's on the agenda or not. While it's not officially recorded anywhere, anyone who watches council meetings will notice that participation by residents in this portion of the meeting is nearly non-existent. It is easy to interpret this decline to a more discouraged electorate, following national trends that show an increasing number of people who have given up trying to influence or work with what they consider a broken and unresponsive federal and state government. Has this trend trickled down to the local level, or have methods of communicating and interacting simply evolved? Have residents stopped participating, or are they simply participating in different ways?

It is no secret that social media has vastly changed the way we communicate in everyday life, and over the past year it has become more evident that it is changing the way residents in Methuen have been interacting with their elected officials. Two recent issues in particular have illustrated how people are still communicating, just not through "traditional" avenues. In both instances residents have created Facebook groups, added members, and communicated to city councilors over Facebook.

The first group to do this since I have been a councilor, possibly the first ever in Methuen, was the Methuen Athletic Improvement Committee (MAIC), a group of residents committed to renovating Nicholson stadium. This group currently has 623 "likes" on their Facebook page. The group posts information on council meetings and contact info for the city councilors. The second group is the "Stop the power plant" group that formed late last year immediately after the now failed power plant proposal first came to light. This group has ballooned to over 2400 members. For reference, that is about the same amount as the number of registered voters in a Methuen precinct. The page quickly became a place where people shared information on the proposal and discussed concerns and issues they had with the project. Making arguments in real time instead of waiting for the next council meeting, members used the page numerous times to call on councilors to take specific actions. Interestingly, the group was so active that two councilors announcing their opposition to the project did so with posts on the group's page, forgoing the traditional press release. One councilor also posted on the page soliciting opinions from residents in the group. More people contacted me over Facebook during those couple weeks then called or emailed regarding the power plant.

It would appear that social media is an effective way to communicate with city council. The issue becomes, if it's not in the official city council meeting minutes, did it really happen? Did that person officially participate? The answer is currently no. But that needs to change.

A state legislator in Washington state recently introduced S.B. 5267, a bill that creates "remote testimony". Essentially, this bill proposes allowing residents to upload prerecorded video testimony, which would then be considered official testimony. The purpose of this legislation is to allow for more people to be able to participate in the legislative process. It shouldn't be a leap to include testimony sent via Facebook and other social media outlets. The rationale for this legislation is the understanding that people are talking and have opinions on issues that are important to their community - they may just not be able to testify or give their opinion in person. Just because they don't physically show up to a hearing or council meeting doesn't mean they shouldn't be heard. While the fate of S.B. 5267 is yet to be decided, the spirit of the bill should be considered here on the local level.

The fact is, people are still invested and engaged in issues here in Methuen. The visual of an empty Great Hall during public participation is not a confirmation of an apathetic electorate, but rather a reminder that times have changed. The public is still participating, just not in traditional ways. We as a council must encourage these new avenues of participation. For, if we are to truly claim to represent the people, we must be listening to the people. Adopting a form of "remote testimony" during council meetings could be a great step in ensuring the public's interactions with their elected officials remains strong for years to come.

Daniel Grayton is currently serving as a Councilor at-Large in the City of Methuen. He can be reached at DanielGrayton@gmail.com

Methuen School Committee Approves Net School Spending Re-Payment Plan

D.J. Deeb
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Members of the Methuen School Committee unanimously approved a Ne School Spending Deficit Repayment Plan Agreement compiled by the Mayor in conjunction with Superintendent Judy Scannell and School Business Administrator Ian Gosselin.

Last spring, the School Committee was informed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) that the City of Methuen is not meeting the state requirements for net school spending. DESE informed the City that it has a total net school-spending deficit of $3,520,637, which resulted from the manner in which credits for retiree health insurance were calculated over previous years.

The approved agreement calls for the City of Methuen to appropriate an additional $586,772.83 to the School Department over the next 6 years (From Fiscal years 2016 through 2021) to repay the deficit in addition to the required amount of Net School Spending funds as established annually by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Had the Mayor and City Council failed to address this in conjunction with the School Committee, state reimbursements to both the City of Methuen and the schools could have been drastically reduced. The School Committee and City officials have tried to balance being fiscally responsible while at the same time providing fair and adequate funding for our schools and meeting state requirements.

Congratulations to Methuen High School Principal Jim Giuca, who recently announced his intentions to retire at the end of this school year in June. Jim was first hired as Principal of the Tenney Grammar School by former Superintendent Phil Littlefield 12 years ago. For the past 6 years, he has worked as Principal of Methuen High School. Superintendent Judy Scannell writes, "Jim has been a key member of the district leadership team.

Over the last 4 years Jim has been the guiding force that brought the high school through physical changes both to the interior and exterior of the building, as walls were torn down, construction fencing and trailers appeared, long established patterns changed and the new structure took place." She continues, "This was all happening during

DEEB: PAGE 31

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY RELAY FOR LIFE
RELAY FOR LIFE
American Cancer Society
It's about being a community that takes up the fight.

Superheroes Take Over Methuen

Morgan Murphy
VALLEY PATRIOT INTERN

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life is the world's largest and most impactful fundraising event to end cancer. It unites communities all across the globe to celebrate people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and take action to finish the fight once and for all. Today, with the support of thousands of volunteers, the American Cancer Society is helping to save more than 400 lives a day. And the Methuen/Merrimack Valley community won't stop until the fight against cancer is finished!

This year, the chosen theme for the charity event is "superheroes," which I find to be a very fitting theme. The event will be lead by a powerful trio of Methuen High School student event chairs: Nancy Pocoli, Shane Godek, and Katie Mrozowski. As of now, event planning is fully under way and the trio is hitting the ground running, as they get ready for their upcoming community kickoff event. Kick-off is open to the public and it's highly encouraged for anyone and everyone to come and see what Relay is all about. The event will take place on Thursday, February 5, 2015 from 6-8pm in the Methuen High School Auditorium (located on 1 Ranger Road, Methuen, MA, 01844). After kickoff, the planning and fundraising will pick up speed and continue with many months of hard work and dedication by all Relay members, officials, and community teams.

So far, Relay For Life of Methuen/Merrimack Valley has a total of 47 teams, 198 participants, and a rising fundraising total of $5,543.79. Fighting cancer is a cause that is easy to rally around and one that many people will gladly support. While the American Cancer Society is making progress towards a world without cancer, only with community dedication and fundraising efforts can we finally finish the fight against this disease. With the help of many volunteers, we aren't just fighting one type of cancer – we're fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. Each person who shares the Relay For Life experience can take pride in knowing that they are working to create a world where this disease will no longer threaten our loved ones or

SUPERHEROES: PAGE 27

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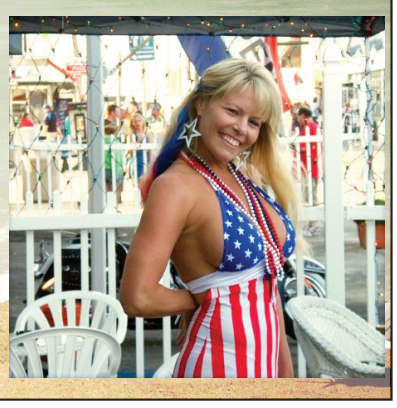

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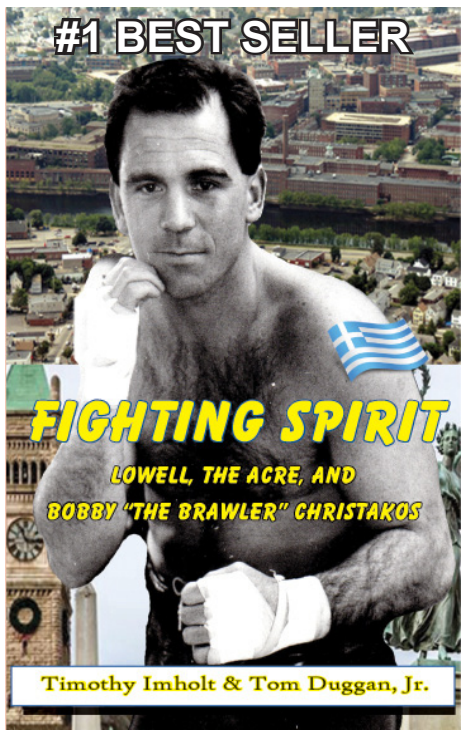
TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK



FIGHTING SPIRIT DEBUTS, #1 BEST SELLER - So, yeah, I wrote a book with my friend Tim Imholt called "Fighting Spirit", Lowell, the Acre, and Bobby "The Brawler" Christakos. The book debuted at #1 on Amazon the day we released it (Jan 29th) and is already a best seller. The book chronicles the history of the Lowell Acre, the formation of Lowell as a town and follows the life of Lowell native and five time Golden Glove Boxing Champion, Bobby Christakos. If you don't know much about boxing or the history of Lowell, Massachusetts we wrote this book for you!

$2.99 on Kindle, $7.99 paperback on Amazon.com

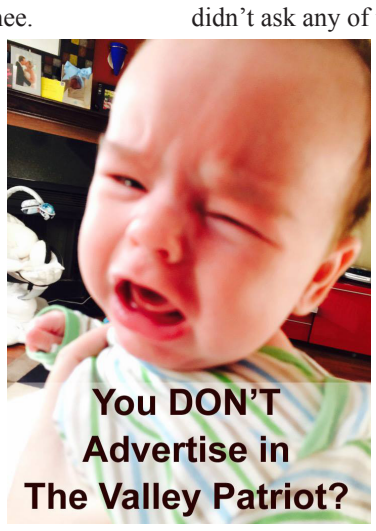
VALLEY PATRIOT CELEBRATES OUR 11TH ANNIVERSARY WITH OUR BIGGEST BASH EVER! MARCH 20th!

In case you missed the front page ad, we are celebrating our 11th Anniversary on March 20th and if you thought last year's BASH was wild, you aint seen nothing yet! Once again, our annual event will take place at the Firefighter's Relief In (the old Knights of Columbus) on Market Street in Lawrence. Plenty of parking, food, comedy, music and dancing, our annual Valley Patriot Awards and Scholarships, local and not so local celebrities, and SO MUCH MORE! Order your tickets on Eventbrite.com or visit valleypatriot.com. Tickets are $25. Proceeds from our raffle go to One Tail at a Time Dog Rescue in Haverhill and our college scholarships to Lawrence High School, North Andover and our new Artie T. DeMoulas Scholarship for a Market Basket Employee. We are always looking for sponsors for this event. Contact Tom at valleypatriot@aol.com.

BUT... I THOUGHT DIZOGLIO WAS A MOUTHPIECE FOR THE SPEAKER?

Last year, I took my share of grief from my conservative friends who are loyal to the Republican Party because, as they said over and over "DiZoglio is a nothing but a mouthpiece for the speaker". It didn't matter that the record said differently. Those who blindly follow a political party will always believe what they want to believe. And since facts don't seem to matter to blind partisans, I'm probably wasting my time here, but I'd like to point out anyway that when it really mattered, and a vote came up last month to oust Speaker DeLeo, Methuen State Rep. DiZoglio voted against Speaker DeLeo not for him. It's that kind of independent leadership that I expect from Diana, but you know as well as I do that in two years, these same blind partisans will be making up something else to shill for their party nominee.

MANCHESTER HOME INVADER WAS ESCAPEE FROM SHERIFF COUSINS' CUSTODY - A federal inmate named Willy Valentin, 29, was in the custody of the Essex County Sheriff's Department when he escaped from the CAC, also known as the "Farm" in Lawrence. He then committed a home invasion in Manchester, NH on January 22nd of this year. This individual was eventually arrested by the North Andover Police. Of course none of this was reported by the Eagle Tribune or any other news organization. Nowhere did any article mention that this guy escaped the custody of Sheriff Frank Cousins before he committed his crimes. Yet, Sheriff Frank Cousins' office continues to spread the myth that they inform the public of escapes. It's bad enough that our brave men and women in blue have to arrest these violent felons once, but when they have to put their lives on the line AGAIN to re-arrest them because Cousins isn't doing his job, it's unacceptable.



NEW SUPER IN NORTH ANDOVER

The North Andover School Committee has signed a contract with former Newton High Principal, Jennifer Price to be the new superintendent of schools. The school committee contract pays Price a 3-year contract for $178,000 a year. Given the activism of the left wing politicians running the Newton School system, I am really concerned that the new superintendent is a left wing radical who will promote left wing politics in our school system. But, I am willing to give her the benefit of the doubt coming in the door. I will, however, be watching Superintendent Price VERY closely, and if any North Andover parents start to see left wing political views being pushed in the schools, we want to hear about it so we can put a stop to it. Since the North Andover School Committee is now run by left wingers, I am sure they didn't ask any of the relevant political questions during the hiring process. I will be watching. I hope you will be too.

SALISBURY STILL NOT TURNING OVER PUBLIC RECORDS

Last month I was cc'd on a letter to the Secretary of State's office by the Tomaselli sisters whereby they were asking for public records from the Town of Salisbury and had to appeal to the state agency. According to the sisters, they requested a certified copy of the May 17, 1982 Article 28 Annual Town Meeting vote and the Town of Salisbury did not turn over the records as requested.

SENATOR IVES APPOINTED CHAIR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS - Last month, State Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives (D-NEWBURYPORT) was appointed as the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Businesses. "This is a great opportunity to oversee meaningful legislation that will impact my district. I look forward to serving in this capacity in the new legislative term, knowing that small businesses play a critical role in the success of our local economy and economic development state-wide," said State Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives.

Additionally, Senator Ives will serve as the Vice Chair of the Senate's Committee on Personnel and Administration and is also a standing member of the Senate's Committee on on Steering and Policy, as well as the Joint Committees on Financial Services, Higher Education, and Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Steering and Policy, O'Connor Ives will participate in identifying and coordinating legislative and policy priorities.

DOG PARK IN ANDOVER

By: Anne Knowles

The new Andover Dog Park is open and residents are invited to bring their licensed dogs for an off leash romp in the enclosed park. Julia Crispin of Andover, is an enthusiastic sponsor of this non-profit association, encouraging owners to make new friends by taking advantage of the facilities for their dogs.

The dog park is located near the Bald Hill Conservation Trails. The land was donated by the town of Andover in support of the project. The improvements, fencing etc., were paid for through the generosity of the Friends of Andover Dog Park. Rules and regulations are posted at the facility.

Veterinarian/President of the Dog Park Association, Tracie Fountas owner of River Road Veterinarian Services, 176 River Road, Andover, said that the support of the many sponsors of the project have devoted much time and money. The continuing improvements will be outlined in www.andoverdogparkma.com the Associations Facebook page.

CONGRESSIONAL POLL

Congresswoman Tsongas has been the subject of many conversations I have had around the Valley as of late. She has morphed from a Congresswoman that once supported the military and police and was at times moderate, to now being an anti-police extreme left wing Elizabeth Warren progressive. When recently given the opportunity to show her real colors and support our police at the Pro Police Rally in Lowell, she was nowhere to be found. Just days later, she was seen hob-knobbing with Congressman Kennedy in Lowell at UTEC, which recently had a beef with the Lowell Police Department.

There are other numerous examples of why she in now perceived as the new Niki Tsongas, who doesn't seem to represent the values of the Massachusetts 3rd Congressional District. So as a result, I am asking my Valley Patriot readers some questions this month. Email me your answers with POLL in the subject box (valleypatriot@aol.com)

A. Do you think Niki Tsongas is vulnerable and could be beat if a legitimate candidate opposed her?

B. Would you be interested in a candidate to oppose Niki Tsongas?

C. Name your top desired candidates to oppose Niki Tsongas:

1. State Senator Eileen Donoghue – Democrat – liberal
2. Andover Selectman Alex Vispoli – Republican – conservative
3. Businessman Rick Green – Republican – far right/conservative
4. State Representative Colleen Garry – Democrat – moderate
5. Lowell Mayor Rodney Elliott – Democrat – moderate/conservative
6. State Representative Diana DiZoglio – Democrat - moderate/conservative
7. State Senator Jamie Eldridge – Democrat – Far left/liberal
8. Former Congressional Candidate Ann Wofford – Republican – conservative
9. Former Congressional Candidate Sam Meas – Unenrolled – conservative
10. Former Congressional Candidate Jon Golnik – Republican – libertarian/liberal
11. Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera – Democrat – liberal
12. Businessman/Radio Talk Show Host John MacDonald – Unenrolled – Moderate
13. Former State Senator Barry Finegold – Liberal/Progressive

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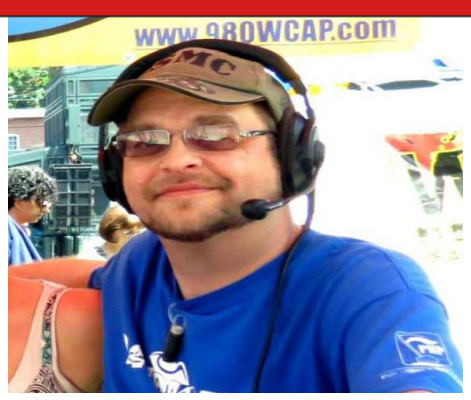

Paying Attention! Saturdays
Tommy Duggan 10-NOON

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FREDDIE SAYS

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Former Willie Lantigua Chief of Staff Lenny Degnan may be out of prison after being convicted of felony corruption charges but he still has some community service to do. Our question is whether or not Lenny has been stripped of his pension as required by law?

14. Former State Senator Steve Panagiotakos – Moderate/Liberal

15. Former State Senator Steve Baddour – Democrat - Moderate/Right leaning

16. Lawrence City Councilor Marc LaPlante – Republican – Conservative

17. Former Congressional Candidate Tom Weaver – Republican – Far Right wing/conservative

18. Businessman/Radio Talk Show Host Teddy Panos – Unenrolled – moderate/conservative

19. State Representative Tom Golden – Democrat – Liberal/Moderate

20. Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini – Democrat – Liberal/Progressive

LAWRENCE - Saturday, February 21: Old Time Rock & Roll with the Fabulous Alfano Brothers at the Relief's Inn, South Lawrence, 7pm. Once in a decade opportunity to visit your lost youth.

MOUNT VERNON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION in LAWRENCE GETS NEW PRESIDENT

Katie Darwin has been elected the new acting President of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association.

METHUEN, GOLF TOURNAMENT Save The Date, Nevins Family of Services Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, May 18, 2015 at the Haverhill Country Club.

HAVERHILL EVENTS

SUN, FEB. 8: AUDITIONS: SPOTLIGHT PLAYHOUSE DINNER THEATER CABARET: 4-6PM at Spotlight Playhouse, 24 Essex Street, Haverhill

TUES, FEB. 10: HOMESCHOOL PROGRAM: BUILDING ART: 10AM- 12PM at Buttonwoods Museum, 240 Water Street, Haverhill

TUES, FEB. 10: AUDITIONS: SPOTLIGHT PLAYHOUSE DINNER THEATER CABARET: 7-9PM at Spotlight Playhouse, 24 Essex Street,

THURS, FEB. 12: VICTORIAN VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY: 3-5PM at Buttonwoods Museum, 240 Water St.

THURS, FEB. 19: SCHOOL BREAK WORKSHOP: WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY BASH: 10AM-1PM at Buttonwoods Museum, 240 Water St.

THURS, FEB. 19: HAVERHILL ARTIST CONNECTION: 6:30 PM- 8:30 PM Location: TBD

SAT, FEB. 21: PARKINGTON SISTERS AT NEW MOON COFFEEHOUSE: 8PM-11PM at New Moon Coffeehouse, 16 Ashland Street, Haverhill

THURS, FEB. 26: POETRY OPEN MIC NIGHT: 6:30- 9:30PMat The Paint and Wine Lounge, 57 Wingate Street, Suite 103, Haverhill

ANDOVER - THE CENTER AT PUNCHARD The Center at Punchard (The Center), 30 Whittier Court, Andover. Hours 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GRAINS AND GLUTENS - Friday, February 6th at 9:30am grains and gluten are in just about every food we eat. Some people react strongly to

NOTEBOOK: PAGE 30

Linda Dean Campbell
State Representative
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617-722-2305

Convicted Felon on Work Release Watching from the Balcony as Deval Patrick Makes His Final Exit

It's his last day as Governor of Massachusetts and Deval Patrick is making his ceremonial exit from The State House for the last time.

He may not have noticed, but if he had looked up from his cheering supporters on his way out the door, he might have recognized Lawrence's favorite convicted felon, Lenny Degnan, watching his grand exit from the balcony.

As Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua's Chief of Staff, Degnan worked with Patrick on many issues and even testified for Governor Patrick's bill to let Lantigua borrow $35M in order to prevent police and fire layoffs in the city. After the legislature passed Patrick's loan order, Lantigua took the $35M, blew the $35M and then laid off 24 cops and 25 firefighters anyway.

Degnan was convicted last April of solicitation of a bribe with corrupt intent, conspiracy, knowing solicitation of a bribe, and unlawful use of official position to gain an unwarranted privilege. The bribe he solicited was from Allied Waste, the company that contracts with the City of Lawrence for trash removal.

Degnan was sentenced to serve 18 months at the Essex County House of Corrections, prohibited from ever running for office again, and mandated to serve 100 hours of community service upon release.

But, Degnan was not out on work release after serving his 18 month sentence, he was out on prisoner work detail at The State House, nine months into his sentence.

By all right, Degnan was supposed to be in prison on the last day of Deval Patrick's reign of power, or at the very least performing community service as an inmate at the Lawrence "Farm".

Degnan once served as the city's acting mayor of Lawrence back in 2000.

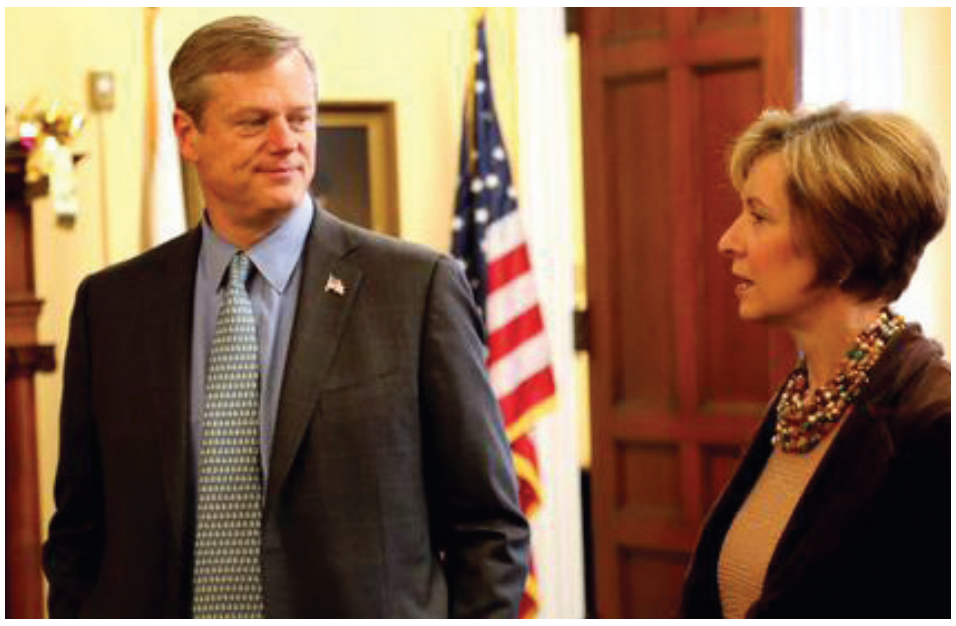
It only seemed fitting that the likes of

Convicted felon Lenny Degnan watching Deval Patrick's grand exit from the balcony while he is supposed to be performing community service.

convicted felon Lenny Degnan would be out of jail 9 months early, enjoying the pomp and circumstances of Deval's last day. After all, Deval Patrick not only looked the other way for 4 years as Degnan and Lantigua ruled the City of Lawrence like Mafia dons, Patrick also appointed a parole board in Massachusetts that routinely let violent criminal offenders back out on to the streets despite being violent in jail and serving multiple life sentences.

I can only imagine how hard WCAP Talk Radio host Howie Carr was laughing when he found out that yet another of Deval's buddies was out early on work release, but somehow managed to get a work detail … at The State House … on Deval's last day, … so that he could say goodbye.

Patrick Blanchette and Lenny Degnan testify for Deval Patrick's $35 million bailout loan for Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua in 2010.



Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker and State Auditor Suzanne Bump meet to talk about the state's financial condition.

Braintree High School Cheerleaders support the Braintree Police!

Patricia Karkashian of Lynn (L) Regent of the Col. Timothy Pickering Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) presents to member Susan Piazza of Lawrence (R) a certificate from the National DAR "In recognition of Valor * Service * Sacrifice during the Vietnam War". Ms. Piazza helped establish the communications department when she served on the Admiral's Staff at the Naval Air Station in Millington, TN.

Retired Lowell narcotics detective Jim Campbell came out to attend the pro-police rally in Lowell last month despite his health and the sub freezing temperatures. Jim told Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan he wouldn't have missed it for anything.

Lowell State Representative Tom Golden (D) with Air Force veteran John MacDonald of WCAP, State Rep. Diana DiZoglio (D-Methuen) and 980WCAP morning host Teddy Panos of the Athenian Corner in Lowell all turned out to support the pro-police rally at the Lowell Police Station last month. SEE STORY PAGE 9.

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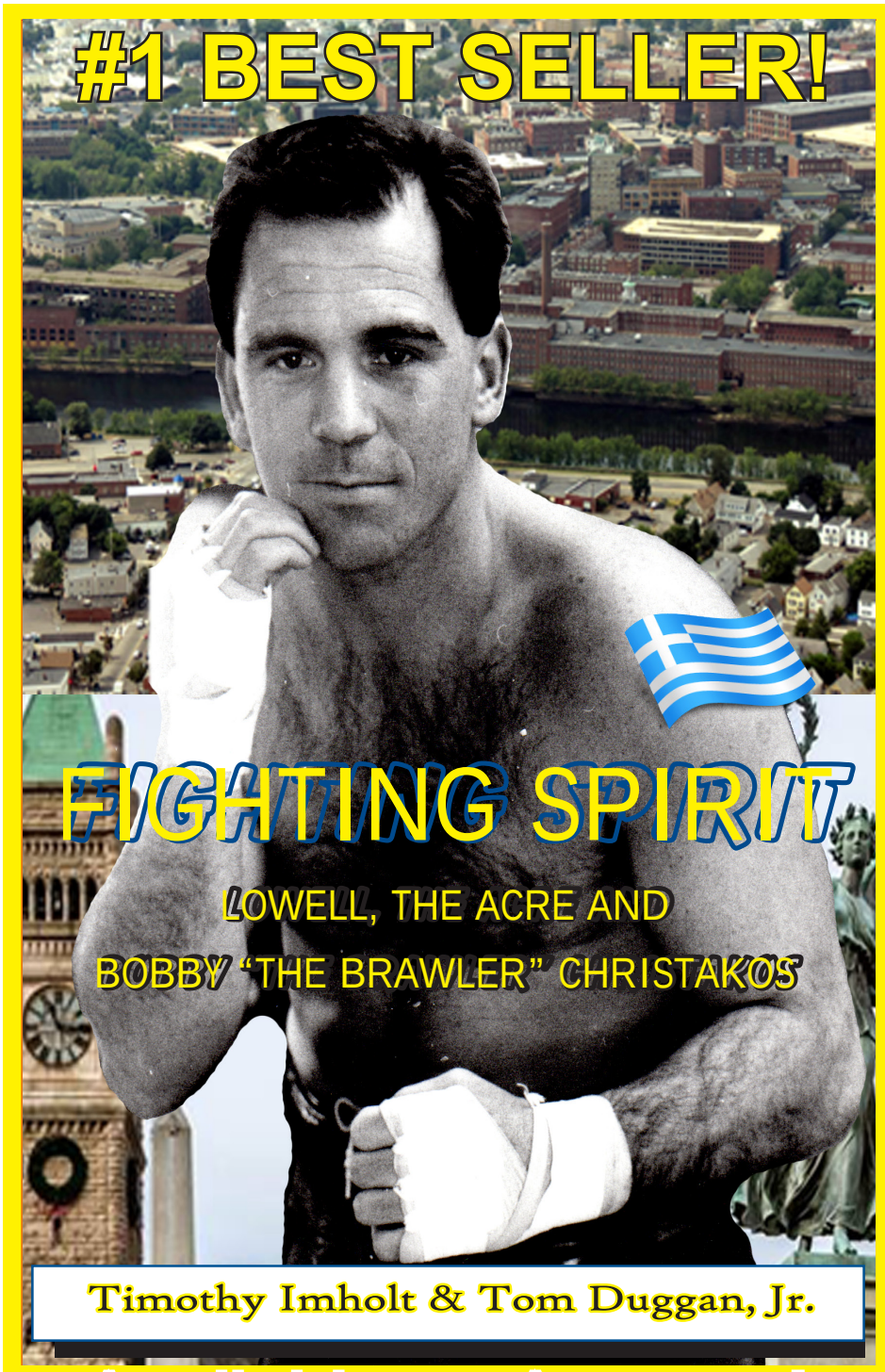
Newly sworn in Massachusetts State Treasurer Deb Goldberg with Denise Perrault of Lawrence after the swearing in last month.

Massachusetts Governor-Elect Charlie Baker, his wife Lauren, Chester Mitchell - Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary Education, Jim Peyser - Secretary of Education, and Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera at the Frost School last month on the day before Baker was inaugurated. The students of the Frost School put on a performance for the incoming governor who spoke to the kids and toured their classrooms.



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Bienvenue au NH? Kwenda mbote. Ni hao!

Alex Talcott
DURHAM NEW HAMPSHIRE

One hundred Congolese refugee families will not be welcomed to the Tri-City region of New Hampshire any time soon, according to Foster's Daily Democrat reporting on a conference call last week involving Dover Mayor Karen Weston, Rochester Mayor T.J. Jean, Somersworth Mayor Dana Hilliard, NH Health and Human Services Department state refugee coordinator Barbara Seebart, and staff from the offices of U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Kelly Ayotte.

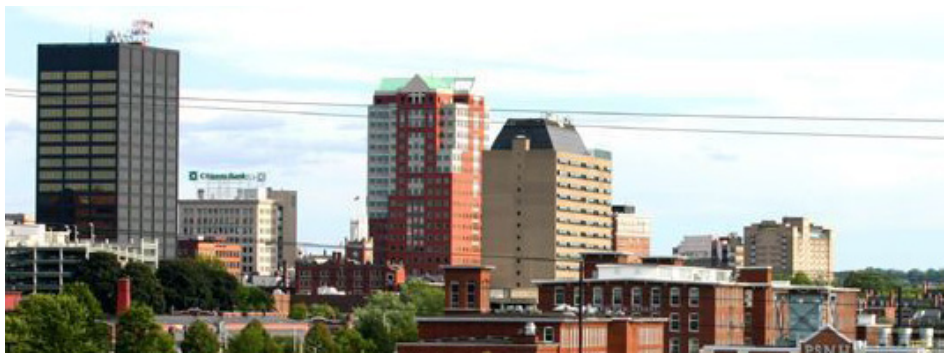
Since earlier July and December reporting by the Seacoast newspaper on the rumored resettlement, "how" questions have been answered apparently—clarifying roles, powers, and processes of the U.S. State Department and the Manchester NH-based nonprofit Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success, formerly the Somali Bantu Community Association. Six years after its founding, the SBCA reformed as the more multinational ORIS in 2011, the same year Manchester made the New York Times for "a highly unusual move," Mayor Ted Gatsas and the city council asking the State Department for a moratorium on refugee resettlement in the population 109,500 city. Gatsas's gripe was with another nonprofit, the Boston-based International Institute of New England, which he said had failed to loop in the city on implementing previous refugee adjustment.

There is a federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Office of the Administration for Children & Families, part of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security considers whether to grant refugee status to out-of-home-country individuals not availing themselves of living in the protection of that country of nationality due to "persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion." Benefits and services through ORR are available to persons who, separately or additionally, meet eligibility requirements as "asylees," "Cuban/Haitian entrants," "Amerasians," "victims of human trafficking," "unaccompanied alien children," or "survivors of torture."

New Hampshire's HHS Department lists three Voluntary Agencies that contract with the State Department's Bureau of Population and Migration to receive, orient, counsel, house, and provide basic healthcare to refugees: the International Institute of New Hampshire in Manchester, the Interfaith Refugee Settlement Program (jointly Church World Services, Episcopal Ministry Migration, and Lutheran Social Services), and New Hampshire Catholic Charities. NHHHS also lists Saint Anselm College's English for New Americans Program under an Other Providers heading on its refugee agencies page. These sponsored services are for recognized refugees who make it here.

"Who," "where," and "why" questions about the 100 Congolese families (elsewhere conjectured at 3,000 people) have

CONGO: PAGE 25



Top Ten Restaurants in Manchester

Justess Jacobson
MANCHESTER, NH COLUMNIST

I love food. Anyone who has known me for more than ten minutes knows, that I do indeed love food. My favorite tends to be Italian food, but I am not picky and will eat anything in front me. For me, a good restaurants has to have great atmosphere, I want to feel welcomed and cozy. It must also have the bang for the buck, I don't want one french fry with a glaze elegantly drizzled and be charged $21. I also look at the average wait staff and how they treat their customers. The last thing I look at is the general experience, the food was great, the service was flawless, the location is convenient, and the prices are comparable to the proportions.

10. Red Barn Diner. Located on Elm St, it is a quaint little diner that I cannot get enough of. The food is always fresh and made to order. The wait staff knows their customers by name, and that when I am drunk we need a corner table (I may or may not have been there after a couple long nights), and the wait staff is always so willing to make jokes and add some sarcasm to the cup of coffee. If you ever go there, you have to try the eggs benedict, it's to die for!!

9. Rita Mae's Diner: This is located on the west side of the city, that is less than a block away from Catholic Medical Center. This little diner has the absolute best coffee I could even fathom. I don't know if they put crack in it, or what, but I find myself drinking three or four cups of coffee every time (and I am not a big coffee drinker). They serve breakfast all day (which always works for my afternoon wake up calls) and the staff is always extremely friendly, and have that pot of coffee in their hand making their rounds. It's not a busy place, but it's great place to make memories, and bellies happy.

8. Puritan Back Room: There is no way this restaurant wasn't making the list. Not only is their chicken famous country wide (it's true, people come from all over New England to have some backroom chicken), but also their mudslides are heaven in a cup. They limit you to two drinks because they are so strong, but they are so good and strong, all you need is two! The prices are a bit over what I would like to pay, but it is worth it.

7. Hanover St. Chop House: This is located on Hanover St, which is about two blocks away from the heart of the city. The food is absolutely immaculate. There is no such thing as a bad meal here, and the wait staff is so incredibly professional. The atmosphere is so welcoming that even when it's busy, it doesn't feel crowded.

6. 900 Degrees is located in the lower of the mill buildings on Dow St. It is

MANCHESTER: PAGE 25

Why New Hampshire Must Always be First

DJ Bettencourt
VALLEY PATRIOT NH COLUMNIST

Every four years, the New Hampshire primary takes center stage in America's political Olympics. Since 1952, presidential candidates of both parties have descended upon the Granite State as the first step in their journey to the White House.

On the snowy campaign trails of New Hampshire, strong candidates have crumbled and unknown candidates have been catapulted to national prominence. Throughout this process, Granite Staters have taken their duty as voters very seriously and have provided the nation with a valuable service. Here, candidates are yanked off of their talking points and sound bite answers and are forced to look voters in the eye and answer the hard questions. We have a long tradition of shaping our country's presidential history.

Yet despite this important service, New Hampshire's first in the nation primary status has not gone unchallenged. Other states have regularly attempted to put their primaries ahead of New Hampshire and have attacked the role that we play. Given these challenges, it is important for Granite Staters to defend our primary and answer the question: why New Hampshire?

New Hampshire has held a presidential primary since 1916, but it did not begin to assume its current importance until 1952. Prior to that time, presidential nominees were selected by delegates to their respective party's nominating convention. This process ignored the will of individual voters as delegates were chosen by state and party bosses with sway over the delegates' loyalties. Making matters worse, delegates frequently cast their votes for a presidential candidate on the basis of patronage or bribes.

In the 1900s, states began to reform this process by holding primary elections to select the delegates to the national nominating conventions. The introduction of these primaries mitigated the corrupt control of party bosses. However, the real impact of primaries wasn't felt until 1949, when then-Speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, Richard Upton, decided to make the primary more meaningful by passing legislation allowing the people to vote directly for the candidates instead of for delegates. It is Upton who is considered the father of the New Hampshire primary and turning it into the quadrennial political extravaganza it is today.

So why should New Hampshire be first? Three big reasons.

First, the state's small size forces candidates to engage in retail. Today's campaigns have become largely informal affairs. We hear a candidate's message and platform largely through 30 second TV and radio advertisements. These messages have been thoroughly vetted by campaign operatives and focus groups and tend to provide little substance.

But in New Hampshire, Granite Staters expect candidates to roll up their sleeves and personally campaign in town hall forums, house parties, and breakfast shops. They expect candidates to look them in the eye and give them honest, direct and thorough answers to the important questions confronting the country. This dynamic is impossible in large states like Texas or California.

Second, because of the intimate style of campaigning that takes place in New

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Where Will Haverhill Be in Twenty Five Years?

Michael Veves
READER SUBMISSION

Twenty five years ago I moved to Haverhill. I told my wife, Marianne, "This place has nowhere to go but up.'

In those days on a Sunday Haverhill was a ghost town downtown. It was a stark contrast to Newburyport and Portsmouth. Today on a Sunday it is much the same while Newburyport might have tens of thousands come through on a given summer Sunday as well as Portsmouth, Rockport, or Salem Ma.

Most cities that want to attract tourists or people with disposible income have art galleries, bookstores, bakeries. There is usually a plethora of restaurants in these cities. Rockport, Concord Ma, York, Gloucester to name a few all have buildings for their local artists. While Haverhill has an art association, it is dependent on using the library for its annual show.

There is only one art gallery in Haverhill downtown doubling as a cafe/light eats to attract people. Amesbury has an entire renovated building for artists and photographers.

Museums are great for cities. The Peabody Essex Museum is one of New England's best museums bringing international exhibitions. If you really want to build a city, build it around museums, art galleries, great restaurants, artisan shops, and stylish bakeries.

Visiting Manchester one day I was astonished to count over 12 restaurants on Elm Street. There were 4 very upscale bakeries, no your garden variety Dunkin Donuts of which Haverhill has 7 or is it 8...as well as a Heavenly Donuts. Salem Ma has nearly as many restaurants as Newburyport where I counted over 20 in a small area from the Tannery all the way to the bridge.

Haverhill has burgeoned with pizza, subshops, and fast food. There are two Wendy's, two MacDonalds, a Taco Bell, Subway. Haverhill had four or five good restaurants 25 years ago. It still does. Looking at the YELP website searching for good Haverhill restaurants I was surprised to see something listed as number 9 or 10 selling 'wings and things.'

If a city wants to attract tourists or people with an eye toward cultural enrichment, it will develop an arts center. Concord NH has the Capital Center for the Arts. Portsmouth NH has the Music Hall. Gloucester has the Gloucester Stage Company. Newburyport has the Firehouse Center. Worcester has the Hanover Theater. Lowell has the Repetory Theater. These cities are all similar in size of population to Haverhill which still has no thriving arts center. No one seems to blink an eye about this dearth of cultural enhancement in Haverhill.

Haverhill's strength remains its open space. On a given spring day thousands might enjoy the trails around Kenoza Lake and the fall around the lake is breathtaking.Lately the area has been marred by drug dealing as well as men exposing themselves.

Meadowbrook Conservation Area is also gorgeous in the fall and far underutilized probably due to the warning signs about hunting which goes of full force from Oct-Dec. Odd that a conservation area allows hunting, bows and arrows. But that's Haverhill for ya. Be sure to wear orange if you go out there during the fall, the best time. Be a responsible runner, hiker, or dog walker. Remember: hunters might not be able to see you.

If 30% of Haverhill's eligible population voted 25 years ago, it was a big success. Today it's possible that 20% will only come out to vote. Local elections feature same old-same old.

Names 25 years ago are still present. Change is heavy resisted and obstinately challenged.

Haverhill led the way is low property taxes and business taxes when I came here. It still does. Property taxes are embarrassingly low. One gets what one pays for.

Twenty five years ago there was a high rise apartment complex built on White's Corner blocking the river view. Another was built at the other end of the downtown, again blocking what was left of a pleasant view. On Water Street adjacent to the fire station is a lot that has been empty for some 5 years and simply is allowed to grow over. A thriving city is architectually pleasing, one which carries eye appeal. The river is blessed with the river running through it, but the city never built itself around the river. The vast row of businesses along Merrimack Street block the river.

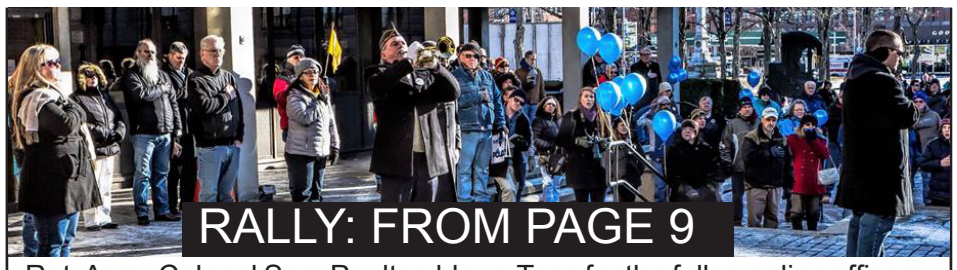
Dollar stores were beginning when I moved here. Then Building 19 went up attracting more dollar type stores which are simply not the sorts of stores that will bring visitors, tourists or, again, people out for a pleasant day of shopping. There were three great shops, all closed now: Citywicks, a beautiful candle shop, Margo's, a wonderful art/import gallery that anchored the area and a shop run by Chris McCaron, a well know activist/businesswoman, that featured imported goods, clothing and foodstuffs. All closed as did two bakeries, both wonderful, that tried to establish downtown. All for lack of interest.

There were no flower arrangements or planters downtown 25 years ago. Today, we have large black metal planters. The idea is great, but the planters wrong. Again, eye appeal brings people to you. Imagine your city is your home. We decorate the outside of our homes with floral arrangements, funky decorations. We make it eye appealing. In one sense, we 'fung shui' our property to make it inviting.

Twenty five years from now many of us reading this will be very old or not around. It takes almost a generation for a city to develop itself into a first class area. Those involved in the planning may not see the full development in their lifetimes. There must be a 'team' with a very long range vision that doesn't let itself become mired in local political turf which is what, sadly, can happen.

Businesses must be involved with schools. Fieldtrips must be developed for kids with businesses stepping forward to sponsor them. None of this is terribly hard to do. What's hard to do is get the commitment as well as the kinds of people who are interested in cultural enhancement, businesses who are interested in their city, painters, the kinds of artists who believe they can find a market for their paintings, writers who believe someone will read them, restaurants that are first class, gift shops that are not dollar stores.

Michael Veves earned his M.Ed. from Lesley College in Cambridge and his M.A. from the University of Arkansas. He left teaching public school and operated an equestrian stable in Haverhill which is closing due to lack of business.



RALLY: FROM PAGE 9

Ret. Army Colonel Sam Poulten blows Taps for the fallen police officers at the Lowell Police Station during the pro-police rally last month.

people. A profession that counsels people when they're at low points in their life, such as: sudden deaths, or suicides in their family. A profession where you see the absolute worst society has to offer on a daily basis such as; murder, child abuse, alcohol, and drug abuse. I get it, because I belong to a profession where no matter how well trained you are, it is still never easy to run toward danger - a profession that doesn't allow you to unsee a fatal accident victim, or an abused spouse, or a neglected child."

"I get it, because I belong to a profession that sometimes takes you away from your family where you don't see your five year-old blowing out those birthday candles, or the first little league home-run, or the game winning basket because you're working late or you were called in for an emergency. I get it, because I know a lot of people who have chosen a profession where putting on a uniform can make you a target where you can be murdered within an instant by someone who doesn't like what you represent. I get it because I know people in a profession that have seen a society decay to such a point that any authority is challenged yet, the police are still expected to maintain law and order. But mainly I get it, because I've walked in their shoes. I've gone to work in the morning wondering if it's going to be my day, my time, or my sacrifice."

"Today, we will honor some of the officers in this state and this country that have made the ultimate sacrifice. Today, we are here to show our appreciation for the men and women who go to work every day willing to make that sacrifice because that's what police officers do. They help people. They get it. May God bless them and protect them and may God bless you for coming here today to show your appreciation for what they do."

A CHALLENGE UNMET

At the end of the rally Tom Duggan issued a challenge to those who say they are against police brutality and racism saying the following:

"There's going to be another rally here next week, they are going to come here to rally against the police. They are going to come here and stand next to that statue of a fallen officer and degrade the police. I have a message for them and my message is this;

In Principal we stand with you when you say you want to stop bad police officers. We understand that there are bad cops, and bad doctors and hell, even bad Saturday morning radio hosts.

And if you are truly going to go out and stop bad police officers, my suggestion to those who are going to rally next week is this. Stand with us in honoring the good police officers, because it's the good police officers who are ratting out the bad police officers, throwing them the hell off the force, and putting them in jail.

We saw their comments on Facebook saying this rally was to white-wash the bad police. But, nobody hates bad cops more than good cops, and nobody hates bad cops more than good citizens. We all know the effects on a community when there's a guy out there on a force breaking the law and not doing what he's supposed to do.

However, it discourages and demoralizes the cops who are out there investigating those guys ... by labeling them, and stereotyping them, and lumping them all together.

We want them to stand with us for the good cops and if they can show us how honest they are about what they are saying, they would be joining us here today and we would be happy to rally with them to get rid of the bad cops. But I have a feeling that's not going to happen.

After reading a roll call of officers killed in the line of duty across the Merrimack Valley, Duggan urged the crowd to disburse to the streets where they waved at beeping cars in a large show of support for Law Enforcement.

**Morgan Murphy contributed to this piece.*

1 in 5 Children Have a Mental Disorder: Lower the Risk Before Pregnancy

Dr. Jin Sung
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

One in five American children today has a mental disorder and the rate is rising, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Affecting 13 to 20 percent of youth under 18, mental disorders impact a child's behavior, ability to learn, and cope with their emotions.

Although researchers don't have a definitive explanation for the rise, studies have linked a mother's autoimmune disease during pregnancy, environmental chemicals, and industrialization of food with the rise in childhood brain disorders.

All of these factors profoundly affect the developing brain in utero and can lead to a brain disorder in childhood.

The rapid rise in the rate of childhood brain disorders is alarming and unnerving. For instance, one study showed the rate of hospital stays among children for mood disorders increased 80 percent since 1997. Inpatient admissions for mental health issues and substance abuse increased 24 percent between 2007 and 2010.

The most commonly diagnosed brain disorder is attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), affecting nearly 7 percent of children. Other commonly reported issues include autism, anxiety, depression, Tourette's syndrome, and behavioral disorders. Alcohol and substance abuse are issues as well.

Autism linked to autoimmune disease in mothers

The brain begins developing as early as the first trimester and is profoundly impacted by the health of the immune system. When a pregnant woman has an unmanaged autoimmune condition, such as Hashimoto's hypothyroidism, type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, vitiligo, etc., it means her immune system is imbalanced and overactive. Research has shown that some mothers of children with autism carry immune compounds called antibodies in their bloodstream that react against proteins in the brain. These antibodies damage the developing brain of the fetus while in utero and may cause autism. Women with autoimmune disease are more likely to carry these immune antibodies.

A parent's diet, physical activity, stress hormone levels, and exposure to environmental chemicals are other examples of factors that can affect a child's brain development beginning in utero.

We see evidence of immune imbalances in children with brain disorders as they typically also suffer from multiple food intolerances, stomach pain, chronic constipation, leaky gut, asthma, eczema, yeast infections, and other issues that signal an imbalanced immune system.

The rising rate of childhood brain disorders is a pressing concern that will continue to affect all aspects of society. Although there is no easy answer, parents-to-be can lower their risk of giving birth to a child with ADHD, autism, or other brain disorder by limiting exposure to environmental toxins both in the home and outside (for instance, rates of autism are found to be higher in those whose mothers lived near freeways during pregnancy), eating a whole foods diet free of common food sensitivities (such as gluten), and testing for and managing any autoimmune reactions.

Dr. Jin Sung is a chiropractic physician who offers a unique, drug-free, and effective approach to the management of chronic health conditions. He utilizes Brain Based Therapy and Functional Medicine approaches to achieve excellent results with his patients. Call 978 688 6999 or visit www.DrJinSung.com

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Wellness, Veterans' Health and Motorcycling

Dr. Frank MacMillan, MD
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Since I began writing for The Valley Patriot last year, you have already figured out that I am a medical doctor in your local community, and it probably does not stretch your imagination for me to state that I am a proud member of the AMA.

Yes, I am a proud member of the American Motorcyclist Association. I got my start riding motorcycles as a teenager, with a neighbor who had a dirt bike. This was in the days of free-range kids where our parents were not planning and scheduling every moment of every day. Although motorcycles were forbidden at home, I figured out that what my parents didn't know wouldn't hurt them as long as I didn't do something so stupid as to confirm their belief that I was irresponsible.

I also figured out that it is better to apologize after the fact than to get an answer that I didn't want to hear fresh out of the gate. More on that later…

Jump ahead to my mid 40s, and I haven't ridden a motorcycle in years.

I had always enjoyed the thrill of openness and speed. I just got distracted by important things on my "to do list", like finish school, work hard to establish myself as a professional, marry and raise a family. I started a business, ran my own medical practice, had employees and patients who depended on me, and a family who depended on me to provide sustenance. I really consider myself to be blessed, but with responsibility comes stress. We all have stresses that need to be addressed, acknowledged, and we need strategies to help us manage that stress.

The stimulation that comes from stress can hold us back, or we can turn it around into something positive. Successfully managing our stress promotes wellness, and this encompasses not only physical health, but good mental health too.

I got a bug, about 6 years ago, to get back into motorcycling. Many friends had taken it up and I was feeling left out of an activity that I had really enjoyed in my youth. Being a responsible adult now, I had a reasonable fear of hurting myself, but not a paralyzing fear. I joined the AMA and decided to relearn as a novice.

I took a 16 hour course sponsored by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, which I highly recommend, and learned how to ride again, both safely and sanely. Motorcycling is an activity that I find an amazing recreational outlet, requires constant attention to surroundings, focuses the mind, but at the same time liberates it from the stresses of ordinary life as you focus on speed, surroundings, potential hazards, upcoming turns, when to brake, when to lean, when to accelerate. The heightened attention required to ride is paradoxically relaxing. It was actually surprising that when I started to read more on the mental benefits of motorcycling, I discovered that many others get the same benefits. The intensity and focus, actually allows you to take temporary leave your life stresses, and clears the head unlike any other activity that I know of. It is not only an amazing thrill; I consider it therapy. It is the closest thing to flying without leaving the ground. Apparently I am not alone on this.

In the February edition of American Motorcyclist, I read about the partnership between the Wounded Warrior Project and Harley-Davidson. Our nation has been at war for most of my adult life, starting with the first Gulf War in the 1990s, and continuing to present time. An unfortunate consequence of ongoing war activities is that many of our men and women veterans are returning with post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD is a syndrome that has always been with us, maybe not well recognized, and affects the wellness and quality of life for many of our returning veterans. Going back to World War II, many veterans have returned with motorcycle riding experience as a part of their service. John Roberts, Executive VP of Warrior relations at the Wounded Warrior Project states, "It is important to have the support of corporations like Harley-Davidson which understand the long-term needs of our nation's veterans and are willing to help warriors recover and live with their 'new normal.'"

Harley-Davidson provided new motorcycles to 6 US military veterans on November 6, 2014 who are living with post-traumatic stress disorder who could not otherwise afford them due to various hardships. Roberts also notes, "We know from our warriors that recreational activities like motorcycle riding provide a multitude of therapeutic benefits for those

DR. FRANK: PAGE 31

Humanity is Always the Correct Direction

Bharani Padmanabhan, MD
MEDICAL CORRUPTION COLUMNIST

Most parents promote to children the desirability of being human. Society then expends resources to replace empathy with "professional" or "corporate" values as in "a corporate decision was made" or "extending sympathy would violate our boundary policies."

This problem manifests everywhere. The lack of an empathic long-term relationship is felt equally in policing, education and medicine. A soft respectful very-law-abiding patient of mine felt compelled to complain last month to Salem's Police Supervisor about the cold heartless attitude of a police officer she interacted with recently. My patient has not had even a traffic ticket in 30 years let alone negative interactions with law enforcement and still got dinged $250 based on a conscious lie. Community policing is not supposed to feel like a corporate encounter.

What usually stands in the way of this basic fact of nature is the class of people with degrees in management.

As people with management degrees have taken over different professions that used to be run by professionals who had come up within the profession, dissatisfaction within those professions has become rife, people are burning out faster, it has become difficult to retain existing professionals and shortages have become commonplace. This is as true for teachers as for doctors. Both now discourage their own children from following in their footsteps.

In both education and medicine, real care has been replaced by Scores and Certifications that allegedly show that the people are being helped. The people themselves know that is not true and are very unhappy.

The management types assert without any shred of evidence that the medical professionals who cared for our grandparents and parents were uncaring murderers. The management types further assert that they would improve 'healthcare' by replacing long-term knowledge of a patient with an electronic chart and that the best doctors are those that are totally interchangeable. It does not matter who the doctor is, they claim, as long as the electronic chart is the same.

When you stop and think about how they could say heartless lies like that, it becomes obvious they are treading in the Progressive tradition of vicious consciously false name-calling. We used to hear a lot of it in the 20th Century from Stalin and Mao. North Korea still does its bit with "thrice-cursed act of treachery." In the US that role has been preserved by the likes of Dr. Lucian Leape and his Leapfrog Group.

This month important studies reported on the result of massive changes in the training of doctors that were imposed 15 years ago DIRECTLY because of Leape's lies. We now have 10 years of hard data and, to no honest person's surprise, there has been ZERO improvement in the care of patients and ZERO improvement in the educational performance of doctors. "There is no evidence whatsoever that patient safety was enhanced by the 2003 and 2011 changes and there is some evidence that surgical outcomes are worse," said Dr. Batjer, chair of Neurological Surgery, UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas. (JAMA. 2014;312:2342-2344, 2364-2373, 2374-2384.)

What this means is we are now at a net LOSS as we have no improvement and yet have LOST the long-term caring relationship with the same independent doctor over years, most of whom have quit in disgust. The wrong people are in charge whose lies Dr. Martin Samuels, the Brigham's Neurology Chief, has called "ill-conceived and self-hating."

Even worse, these same wrong people have inserted themselves into the Commonwealth's annual budget and are directly sucking the taxpayer dry in the form of the Betsy Lehman Center. (chiamass.gov/betsy-lehman-center/)

This taxpayer-funded Center celebrates Dr. Leape and his Leapfrog Group, whose conscious lie - "Up to 400,000 deaths each year are associated with preventable adverse events in American hospitals" - is now blared by a Government agency at taxpayer expense with ZERO independent evidence to support it other than bald assertions from .... Dr. Leape and his well compensated close friends – Dr. Ashish Jha, Dr. Tejal Gandhi and Sir Donald Berwick.

VP readers still remember Brian Evans' poor mother who chose Holy Family Hospital having been misled by Leape's Leapfrog Safety Score and died as a result. It is beyond the pale to have this modern-day Lysenkoism written into the annual budget for the Commonwealth.

I truly wonder about our Legislators. First they pass a law that allows for every single person to be registered with the Government for any prescription they get from their doctor, not just opiates or anxiety pills, which is as Progressive as it gets. Having lived in a Communist country it is totally familiar. (Para c - Chapter94C/Section24A)

And then they fund the Leape fraud with public money!

Clearly a lot of money has quietly changed hands. If Charlie Baker declines to reverse this blatant corrupt fraud, we will know a chunk of it reached him too. For sure.

Dr. Bharani Padmanabhan is a neurologist who specializes in multiple sclerosis in the Boston area. scleroplex@gmail.com

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Ye Gay Ol' Valley

The Gay Agenda

Dani Langiven
VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

I keep hearing about The Gay Agenda. What exactly is that and why haven't I received a hard copy? I'd like to keep udated on what is coming next in the "gay world". Actually, I'd like to know what's coming next in the world, but heteros seem to like labels. I digress, back to The Gay Agenda.

I found a website, that I will not name as not to give it any free advertising, that states that The Gay Agenda is the biggest threat to the right of free speech. The website has dedicated an impressive amount of time and people power to informing the world about The Gay Agenda. Which I feel gives The Gay Agenda some of its best advertising. So, thank you to this website for doing so. I will address a few laundry list items that this website claims are part of The Gay Agenda.

The first item on the website's list is the legalization of homosexuality. So, I ask: why would homosexuality be illegal and why does it have to have a special law to make it legal? I know years ago it was deemed a mental/psychological disorder as well as illegal. Thankfully, as mankind evolves, we see the error of our ways and have removed homosexuality from these stigmas just as we have realized that being left-handed and having certain types of birthmarks are no longer the signs of the devil. I fail to understand why there has to be a special law that states homosexuality is legal. To me it's an inalienable right. It's part of my pursuit of happiness. The website claims that homosexuals demand society approve of our lifestyles. That to me is complete bullwaste. I don't need anyone's approval. There are many lifestyles that I don't approve of, but I will stand by those people and defend their right to live them as long as they do not tread on anyone's freedoms. Homosexuality does not tread on anyone's freedoms and therefore should be legal regardless of anyone's approval. Sorry, website, you're wrong about this.

Another line item defining The Gay Agenda is promoting gay-pride parades. Really, that's on there. I am not a fan of any kind of parade. They're too long, too loud, block major roadways, and are not remotely entertaining. Although, I will admit, gay-pride parades are by far the most entertaining and have the best music. I've been to two. That's enough. I will not seek out another not because I don't think they should be put on, but because I just don't like parades. If you don't like gay-pride parades don't go. If they run past your home, get out of town for a few hours or shut your windows and shades, and turn your music up loud. Let the gay floats roll. Pretty soon the supporters of this website are going to start popping balloons and stealing candy from children.

One very disturbing statement made on the website is that homosexual charity is an oxymoron because homosexual ideology is selfish and self-centered. In essence, homosexuals are incapable of sponsoring a charity or donating to one without them benefiting from it in some way, shape or form. What a disgustingly shallow and ignorant statement. I have donated thousands of dollars and hundreds of items to various charities in my adult life, as have many of my gay and straight friends. None of us that I know of put a note on the check identifying our sexual orientation or asking, "what are you going to do for me". It almost makes me want to stop giving, but I won't because my agenda is the betterment of mankind, not adding to its destruction. "Gay" charities are not trying to spread homosexuality they are dedicated to stopping the physical, mental, and psychological abuse of those of us who are members of its community. When gay youth are 8 times more likely to attempt suicide than their straight counterparts, and upwards of 50% of them are homeless, then someone has to help them and it certainly isn't going to be straight charities supported by narrow minded heterosexuals like the ones who channel their efforts into spreading hate.

In keeping with this theme, according to this website, homosexuals are gunning to ban the counseling for kids confused by homosexual issues. On what is this based? The homosexual community has been advocating for years to allow young people confused by their sexual orientation access to counseling. Too many of our young are killing themselves because the narrow minded and tragically misguided efforts of people like those who created this website. Imagine if their energies were put toward helping our children who have been abandoned by their families or told that they are sick and will be going to hell instead of toward hate filled social media. This website, the people who built and promote it, and others like it are what is killing our youth. Homosexuals have placed decades of effort, millions of hours of manpower, and millions of dollars to trying to get help for our youth. Saying that we have done otherwise is delusional and grossly inaccurate.

The authors of this website express such blatant hatred and paranoia toward homosexuals that it borders on insanity. I'm willing to bet that they are Christian and yet, here they are being the antithesis of everything Jesus Christ advocated for. They are shameful and embarrassing.

So, website that shall not be named, go ahead and be anti-gay. I applaud it. I am under the firm belief that the more energy spent focusing on something the more fuel it is given. Keep writing about The Gay Agenda. Keep bringing more attention to the efforts of our gay community to be protected by law and have the same rights as everyone else because your efforts will help ours. If that is The Gay Agenda then so be it.

Dani Langevin is a teacher and has a Bachelors in Fine Art and Masters in Education. She has written four young adult novels, one of which is self-published. You can email Dani at DaniBLangevin@aol.com

Beneath the Surface

What is Love?

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD

In last month's column we tackled the question of happiness. We were prompted to explore its meaning as 2015 began with many wishes for "Happy New Year". As we concluded, happiness is often confused with a temporary emotion; yet it is integral human fulfillment primarily of our higher rational nature. Happiness is flourishing through virtuous living and the contemplation of truth. This includes doing what is right - despite the consequences.

Now it's February, St. Valentine's month, and we turn our attention to another question: What is love? Like happiness, love is essentially an act of the will, a choice one makes despite the consequences, even to those that are gravely unlikable. But is this what most people understand to be love?

There are two challenges. First, English is at a great disadvantage for having only one word for love, and it has been grossly over-used. You can 'love' your mother, your dog, your car, the Red Sox, chocolate, oak trees, the color red, or your favorite shoes. This is compounded by living in an era of subjectivism, where love can be virtually anything we say it is. Many behaviors are now claimed to be an expression of love, simply because there are consenting adults. To counteract these two problems, two factors must be explored: the different kinds of love, and whether love has an objective meaning.

To begin, let us borrow three ancient Greek words for love: philia, eros, and agape. Philia is a friendship-love (hence, Philadelphia is the "city of brotherly love"). Eros is of attraction-love, which is also a need-love, born out of natural desire. Agape refers to a selfless, sacrificial love. This love is not a movement of the passions like eros, but rather is an active choice of the will. Agape is to will the good of another. While eros seeks satisfaction from another, agape commits to the other regardless of how unpleasant. Eros focuses on what you can get; agape, on what you can give. Eros is conditional; agape, unconditional. In sum, eros says "I love you because of..."; agape says "I love you in spite of..."

Eros works well for us much of the time. We may desire a candy bar, or find pleasing a beautiful painting or a majestic palm tree. Many things, and persons, attract us physically and emotionally. We often think the notion of being "in love" means real love. Herein, however, lies the danger. With things, eros works well: We can use things for our pleasure and discard them when we're through. For persons, however, eros without agape leads to selfishness and abuse, and consequently broken hearts and major scars. It is highly unethical to use people for one's own pleasure and benefit, as one would use an object or thing. Wise people and wise cultures understand this and maintain overt disciplinary measures to protect people from being used. However, our more adolescent society, which now thinks using and abusing people is okay as long as there is mutual consent, is in the process of learning the hard way. There is still hope that we can learn before obsession, addiction, and broken families destroy us.

The second consideration of the nature of love is its expression and objective meaning. Can unnatural acts be loving if both parties consent? If a whole society consents? No. Personal preference can never trump the truth of human nature. True love goes beyond itself to give life to the other; and, like happiness, love animates human nature. It does not, and cannot, contradict it.

So the essence of love is more than a passive emotional high or physical desire. It is an act of the will, a commitment to the objective good for another. We see this kind of commitment codified in traditional marriage vows: for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and health, until death do us part. There is no provision for getting tired of each other or for eventually finding younger co-workers more attractive. It is a permanent commitment to the other despite all circumstances, whose natural purpose is union and procreation, and whose supernatural purpose is to help each other get to heaven. Ultimately, therefore, love cares about the other's eternal destiny.

St. Valentine is said to be a 3rd century Christian martyr who died in a Roman prison upholding the truth about love. Unless we commit and choose to condemn all of love's counterfeits, we dishonor St. Valentine and the true meaning of Valentine's Day.

Paul Murano teaches philosophy at North Shore Community College and Middlesex Community college, hosts "Beneath the Surface" radio on Monday nights 9-11pm, and co-hosts the Paying Attention! radio program with Tom Duggan, both on WCAP 980AM. Paul serves on the board of Heartbeat Pregnancy Help in Burlington, and is a singer/songwriter/musician. Email Paul at PJDM@aol.com.

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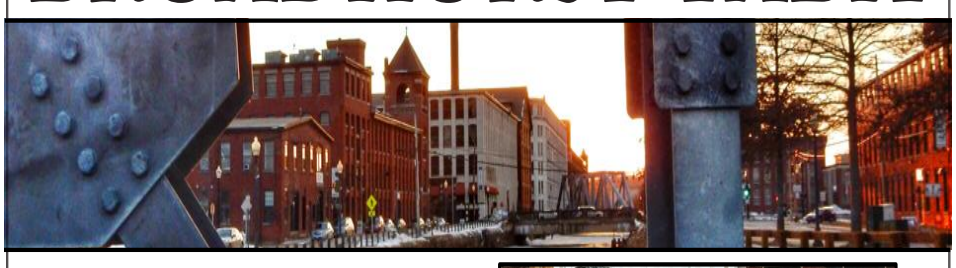
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Our Toxic Relationship with Wind Power

Christine Morabito
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

If clean, safe and efficient energy is to be our standard, then why use wind power at all?

When we examine the entire process, the construction and operation of wind turbines is a dangerous and toxic affair. It begins with the mining of rare earth minerals, a collection of chemical elements manufactured mostly in China. The ill-protected workers are exposed to hazardous materials like hydrofluoric acid and radioactive particles. These substances are then exported worldwide, for use in wind turbines as well as computers, cell phones, hybrid cars and energy saving light bulbs.

The process of refining of these elements leaves death and destruction in its wake, polluting farmland, killing livestock, seeping into waterways and poisoning drinking water. Besides the devastation to the environment, nearby villagers report significant health problems, like bone, respiratory and heart diseases. Some residents suffer helplessly while their teeth fall out. But, since all this is occurring in the Far East, Western environmentalists don't seem particularly concerned.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the massive windmills gobble up valuable habitat, as do the roads needed to access them. These eyesores ruin otherwise picturesque landscapes, and are built with little regard for the migratory paths of protected wildlife. The deadly blades can reach speeds up to 170 mph, often chopping birds into pieces. Most recent data estimates that 600,000 birds and hundreds of thousands of bats fall prey to this "green" technology every year.

Just east of San Francisco lies a 58 square mile wind farm called the Altamont Pass. The turbines have reportedly killed some 3,000 golden eagles, putting their population in serious jeopardy.

In the 30-odd years that wind energy has existed, only 2 companies have been prosecuted for illegally killing protected birds. The first was in 2013, when the U.S. Department of Justice and Duke Energy, of Wyoming, announced a $1 million settlement related to the deaths of 14 golden eagles and 149 hawks, blackbirds, larks, wrens and sparrows.

In January, 2015, Pacific Corp, also in Wyoming, was ordered to pay $2.5 million for killing 38 golden eagles and 336 other protected birds.

Under the auspices of fighting climate change, the Obama Administration is awarding wind-power companies a 30-year amnesty in the form of "take permits," which allow the killing of endangered species. It's ironic that our tax dollars are being used to study and protect endangered species, while simultaneously subsidizing an industry that is killing the aforementioned animals.

By working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wind producers can avoid creating killing fields. The key is to bypass well-known migration routes.

I spoke to Bob Johns, Public Relations Director at the American Bird Conservancy. When holding energy companies accountable, Johns says, "green energy is held to a different standard." The problem is one of selective enforcement. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines are voluntary and not enforced via regulation like those governing oil and electric companies. Johns stressed that "wind producers are not 'mom and pop' businesses, but large corporations," with little incentive to follow mere guidelines. He believes regulations are needed to stop the egregious killing of birds and level the playing field. Deadly turbines are a worldwide problem, with wind farms in Spain, Belgium, Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands, among others.

What exactly is the up-side? Wind energy is expensive, costing about twice as much as conventional power sources. And, since wind is heavily subsidized, taxpayers fund it before and after it is produced, as evidenced by the infamous Cape Wind project in Massachusetts, which is already $10 million over budget. Wind energy is not particularly efficient, producing only between 3 to 4 percent of our country's electricity. Like other alternative energy sources, turbines must be backed-up by fossil fuels when the wind isn't blowing.

Like all fledgling energy sources, new technologies, combined with regulations, will make wind energy safer, cleaner and more efficient. Through innovative filtration systems, we have made great strides in removing pollutants from fossil fuel emissions. The plastics we have come

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New Legislative Session Opportunities for Positive Change

IN YOUR CORNER WITH SENATOR KATY IVES

As I begin my second term as State Senator and a new two-year legislative session, I have filed a cross section of bills that will directly benefit constituents, municipalities and small businesses in my district. I filed 33 bills in total and also co-sponsored a number of important bills. The legislation below highlights a number of bills I filed. Complete descriptions of the comprehensive list of legislation I filed, as well as bills I filed on behalf of constituents can be found on the Massachusetts State Senate website: https://malegislature.gov/People/Profile/KAO0

An Act Relative to Fair Access to Surplus State Equipment

As the former Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development, I know how important this industry is to our economy. Arts stimulate the economy by drawing businesses and re-vitalize communities. In order to support these businesses and to continue to draw tourists, I have proposed legislation to promote the sales of original works of art, by allowing no sales tax to be charged for original works of art in a principal place of business situated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of individual original works of art of not more than $5,000. This includes a painting, drawing, print, photograph, limited editions lithograph, graphic design or other like picture; a work of sculpture, etching, ceramic, clay, glass, fiber, leather, metal, wood, mixed media, or silk screen, as well as crafts, made by the hand of the artist or under the artist's direction which is not intended for mass production.

An Act Relative to Fair Access to Surplus State Equipment

Municipalities with limited budgets deserve opportunities to purchase state equipment useful to DPWs. Although, MassDOT currently contracts with an outside party to auction off surplus property, municipalities should be given priority because they are operating with decades old equipment while the state sells surplus equipment to third parties. I filed a bill that would give cities and towns the opportunity to purchase any surplus vehicles and equipment that the Department of Transportation would otherwise put in an auction. MassDOT would create a system of notifying municipalities and establishing a 14-day window for an exclusive sale to purchase.

An Act Relative to Tax Abatements for Deaf Residents

Currently, municipalities may give a tax abatement to any resident who is blind but abatements are not available for residents who are deaf. This bill will allow municipalities to opt-in to this option.

An Act Relative to Public Records Request

Government should have transparency and accountability and the only way to ensure that this is occurring is to have access. Under Chapter 66 Section 10 of Massachusetts General Laws, a custodian has 10 days to comply with a request for public information. However, there are no significant penalties for non-compliance with this law. This bill would implement fines on the custodian of public records for failing to comply after 30 days and until compliance occurs. In addition, a non-compliant custodian would be responsible for any court costs incurred after 60 days of the original request. In the previous legislative session, this bill was incorporated into a larger public records bill and was given a favorable recommendation from the Joint Committee on State Administration. I re-filed the bill in this new session with the goal making further progress so these provisions are passed into law.

An Act Creating a Commission to Study the Effects of Unfunded Mandates on Municipalities and An Act Related to Unfunded Mandates on Public Schools

The challenge of unfunded mandates burdens our municipalities and school districts. I filed two bills in response to mounting unfunded mandates. The first would establish a commission to review unfunded mandates on municipalities and the second bill would require the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to conduct an analysis of all new state laws, regulations, or administrative directives; including: the cost these laws and directives have on school districts and its employees and, the impact they have on time on learning in the classroom and overall impact on improving student achievement.

An Act to Prohibit Misleading Telemarketer Calls to Consumers

As a standing member of the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure, I review many bills that affect consumers. It is becoming more common for telemarketers to mask their telephone numbers with the phone number of the person they are calling by using a device to change the name or telephone number on a caller identification display. I filed a consumer protection bill which would prohibit that practice.

An Act Relative to Access to Housing for First Responders

First responders often can't find housing that's affordable in the city or town where they work. I filed legislation that would allow MassHousing to create a special home loan program for first responders required to live within a minimum distance from the municipality they serve. Those eligible for this program would be required to meet program income limits and live in the eligible home as the primary residence for the term of the loan and meet those additional requirements required by MassHousing.

An Act Relative to School Bus Safety

At the beginning of this school year, two students in Methuen were struck by a vehicle that ran through a bus stop and left the scene. This bill would allow a municipality to install and operate video camera monitoring systems with audio recording capabilities on the outside of school buses, solely for the purpose of ensuring the safety of bus passengers and drivers.

Senator O'Connor Ives can be reached at KATHLEEN.OCONNORIVES@MASENATE.GOV

TEEN TALK WITH ANA DEBERNARDO

Life is Always an Option

As I was sitting in my living room brainstorming ideas for this month's column, my thought process was interrupted multiple times by my 2 year old cousin, John, who was fascinated by the off button on my iPad. I would explain to him that the button was off limits, and in response, he would look at me with a knowing, mischievous smile and, without breaking eye contact, reach slowly over to the button and shut it off once more.

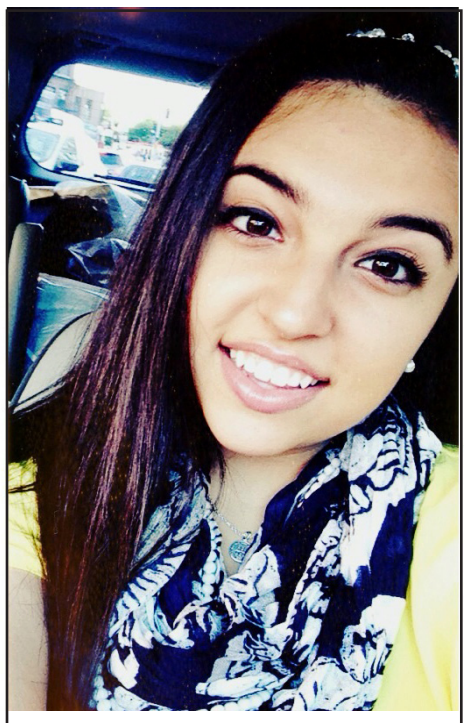
What began as mild frustration transformed into a really incredible revelation. In my initial impatience, I decided to briefly give up and have a serious staring contest with my cousin. I found that the more closely I examined him, the sadder I became. He looked so blissfully happy as he stared back at me upside down on my living room floor. To think that 57,762,169 babies could have enjoyed life as my cousin was doing so in that moment was unfathomable. How was it possible that they had been deprived of a chance to live and laugh and love as we do every day?

Last week, I traveled with about 50 classmates, teachers, and parents from my school to Washington, D.C. for the March for Life. This was my third year attending and I find the trip tremendously rewarding. Many people question the genuine motives behind a teenager's desire to attend youth groups and pilgrimages, rather than a weekend home with family, or a night out with friends. Many times, people have accused me of going solely for the social aspects of the retreats.

It would be dishonest of me to deny that; however, I understand where those people are coming from. It's an incredibly special thing to gather in an arena full of young people worshipping together as one. Sometimes it's really easy to feel alone in faith, but that night on the march, I had never felt so close to my company.

I truly believe that's part of what's so amazing about these events. You get to grow so close to people who you might not have normally been acquainted with outside this intimate experience. If only for an instant, you're united in your beliefs and the result is a feeling unparalleled by any other.

Seeing 700,000+ people coming together to fight for life reminds me year after year that community is a vital part of faith. Everyone puts their prior quarrels and conflicts aside and works together to be heard. In these three days, thousands



"Seeing 700,000+ people coming together to fight for life reminds me year after year that community is a vital part of faith."

of people from across the globe represent the voices of those 57,762,169 lives who might have been our neighbors, friends, and brothers. I understand that for many, this is an extremely sensitive subject as there are situations where a new addition to the family is not always welcomed. But inconvenient timing and misguided behavior leading to conception do not invalidate the life that has been created. Every life matters. If one living person at this moment in time had never been conceived, the world would be a completely different place. Someone would have been deprived of a sister, a mother, or perhaps a country deprived of a president or a queen; 57,762,169 is a frighteningly large number. Every group we gather in today would be three times as large had those lives been given the chance.

Fighters for the Pro-Life cause don't exist to scorn mothers who have had abortions, or judge those who consider the possibility. We simply exist to defend those who cannot do so for themselves. To be Pro-Life means to recognize the dignity in every human being; to see that no person is superior to another.

Who is justified in thinking any less

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BABIES AND BRIEFCASES

SAVING MONEY WITH YOUR STARTUP

Cheryl Hajjar
VALLEY PATRIOT MOMMY COLUMNIST

You are reading this article because you have either decided to start a new business in 2015 or you are looking for ways to save money in your existing business. Either way you are reading the right column. Many of you know that my business, The Indigo Pixies is not new to the startup world. In fact, it has been my experience, and a little bit of trial and error, of the best ways to use funds and the not so best ways to use funds. Everyone will always tell you that the way to make money is to spend money. Yes and no. With nearly 50% of new businesses failing in the first two years, its is hardly because of lack of commitment and drive, but more so of not knowing how to cut costs and have a solid financial plan. The best way to achieve a healthy bank account is to learn early on in the game that low overhead is the way to big profits.

Here are some suggestions on starting lean and growing strong:

1. The Lawyering Up Lowdown: In the beginning, we knew that going to a lawyer to incorporate and set up our business was the first step. Lawyers are a necessity to some degree. Paying for the pie in the sky law firms in Boston, not so much. Fees ranging from $300 to $500 plus an hour can get costly and probably not in your budget, at least in the beginning. Until you have created the next Apple or Uber, you can wait to hire them. In the mean time, find a local attorney to do the work. They many not have the fancy waiting rooms that look like you just stepped out of Andy Warhol's loft, or the free bottle of water, but trust me; they are fully capable of doing the same work for a lesser fee. Legal Zoom is also another way to do it yourself if you are feeling ambitious. There are plenty of boilerplate documents and instructions that can get you through those first stages of creation of your entity. Have confidence in yourself.

2. Barter, Barter, Barter: Bartering your professional service is something that has been done for centuries and is still being done today. If you have a service or specialty that you provide that may serve as useful, offer it up in exchange for something that your business needs. Other business owners will usually be happy to negotiate some sort of terms with you. You never know until you ask.

3. Rent Communal Space: With new startups being created everyday, these are all the rage lately. Instead of renting out an office space, why not rent a space in one of these locations? Most incubators charge anywhere from $100- $300 a month depending on their location and with a skeleton crew in the initial stages of your business, it just makes sense to cut costs on rent.

4. Do It Yourself: As the CEO of the Indigo Pixies, I have learned how to do most every single function of my business. From finances to creation of product, sourcing and marketing, I'm the go to girl. Why is it so important to do this? In the beginning, it teaches you every aspect of running a business. It's a phenomenal education. You learn by trial and error on all facets, which things you implemented worked and which didn't so when you do have the budgets and you start to hire people, you won't spend unnecessary amounts of funding on things like marketing budgets and sales strategies. Learning how to do everything yourself will not only save you money in the beginning, but it will allow you to have a great understanding of all of the logistics work within your infrastructure.

5. Coupon Everything: If you think couponing is only what your grandmother does, think again. As an extreme couponer myself, I save in between 50-100% on everything I buy, including supplies for our business. Paying full price for anything these days with all of our Internet options is just not being savvy and quite wasteful. You can always find a deal whether it is for personal use

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CONGO: FROM PAGE 18

remained unanswered publicly. Worse, these implicit, fundamental questions have gone unasked. If there was ever advocacy for an allotment of some discernible group of people – and to the Tri-City communities rather than the more common Concord-Nashua corridor or Laconia – government officials and news journalists have not so identified. Moreover, there hasn't been a dignified human rights conversation, seizing on this teaching moment. Entirely absent from the discourse: Why are these families seeking refuge? Where are they from? What's going on there?

"Congolese" is a word that applies to nationals of two autonomous Congo countries, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Congo are but one of hundreds of ethnic groups in both countries (though likely the largest), and there is a significant presence in Angola. They are Bantu (and may speak Bantu languages, with French) like many of NH's Somalians, who are descendants of the slaves of Arab traders in Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Again, it's unclear whether any distinct set of families from any one or many ethnic groups, for any shared or variety of causes, was ever targeted for the communities. It appears that an altruistic, ambitious ORIS considered initiating a State Department application process and inquired about capacity in Dover, and then community members and officials alike believed there would soon be a sizable influx. That there are this many people, and many more, pending resettlement somewhere in America is for sure. In 2012, the last fiscal year of posted data on refugee arrivals by the ORR, 1,943 Congolese arrived as refugees to the United States, 1,839 of those from the more populous Democratic Republic (0 to NH from the Republic, 42 from the DRC).

The same week Dover's mayor felt "put at ease" by the federal-state-local call (understandable from a cost concern standpoint), a New Hampshire state trooper put at ease a bus of tourists from China and Taiwan, impacted by the snowstorm travel ban in Massachusetts. "NH state trooper speaks Chinese for tourists driving through blizzard" was the headline at WMUR.com. You'd hope there might be some multilingualism in law enforcement, even here. But Lt. John Marasco (a colleague of mine on the faculty of Southern New Hampshire University) turned a disaster into an adventure for international visitors. White, a hulking figure, his Mandarin fluency surprised and delighted the scared. They clapped, videoed, and asked him to pose for pictures with them.

Sadly, unlike the vacationing Chinese and Taiwanese, we don't know who the displaced Congolese are, or even if they are. We don't know where they are, or where they'll go next.

Alex Talcott, J.D., has taught social studies subjects in NH and four other states and previously served as teaching and research assistants for professors of African studies and U.S. foreign policy.

MANCHESTER: FROM PAGE 18

small, but cute and trendy. It has something for everyone! The thin crust fresh pizza is absolutely to die for with its fresh ingredients. Also, the pasta is incredible! I love the atmosphere, and they have some pretty great drinks!

5. Johhny Troys is located in a little plaza off of South Willow Street near the airport. The Italian food is AMAZING and, you get what you pay for! The veal parm overflows the plate and is very tender too! Pizza, subs, pasta, if you like it, they have it. A must try for large appetite and small budget.

4. XO. This restaurant has excellent tapas. They have something for everyone whether you want Greek, Italian, or a great steak this is the place to go. With it being conveniently located on Elm St, it is less than a block away from The Palace theatre. You can dine and walk right over to the theatre for a great night!

3. Billy's Burgers. I only went here once before I started working at the hospital, but my co workers were always saying how great the food is, and it has become regular that we go there. The burgers here are easily the best in town. If you want a good burger, than look no further than Billy's. It is located on the corner of Massabesic and Tarrytown road, it is literally right next door to the Elliot Hospital Main Entrance. Great food, awesome drinks, wonderful prices, and fabulous wait staff. A must try.

2. Portland Pie Company is located in the best part of the city. It is within walking distance to the biggest entertainment venue in New Hampshire, next door to a hotel that holds expos and conferences every day. The food here is so incredible you will have your mind blown. Diane Sawyer from Good Morning America ate here once, and even wrote a rave review. The pizza is so perfectly made with fresh toppings, and a handmade pizza sauce. The salads are unique and all the salad dressings are handmade from scratch. The atmosphere is always incredible, and I have never had a bad time there. I highly recommend this place if your coming to see an event at the Verizon or just looking to try something new.

1. The BEST restaurant in town hands down has to be Mangia. It is a great little bistro that offers outside seating in good weather. It is an Italian bistro that offers all food cooked to order right down to the sauces! The alfredo sauce is handmade every day and it is the most amazing alfredo sauce you will ever taste. It's wonderful for a date night, and you can even bring your own booze! I will warn you the prices are a little higher than I would prefer, but the food and experience is SO worth it!

I have to give credit to my mother for helping me with some of these reviews. She gave me her advice where she is much more experienced in restaurants than me. So, not only did you get reviews from a 21-year-old college student, but also a well-traveled and cultured woman did add some extra restaurants I never would have thought about!

Justess Jacobson resides in Manchester NH, has a degree in communications, is now studying to be a juvenile probation officer and works at a local hospital as a nutrition assistant. You can email Justess at Justessjacobson@yahoo.com

FIRE CHIEF: FROM PAGE 6

from Northeastern University.

Mayor Rivera's Fire Chief Search Committee has been meeting since July 2014. Fifteen individuals submitted applications for the Fire Chief position. "Our Fire Chief Search Committee worked diligently to identify the most qualified and well-prepared candidates for my review, I am both proud of the work they did and the quality of the applicant pool." said Mayor Rivera.

Deputy Fire Chief Moriarty's candidacy will be introduced to the Lawrence City Council for approval.

Mayor Rivera has also set up meetings with the city's neighborhood association presidents, and with the business community this week so people in the community can meet and greet our candidate.

WIND: FROM PAGE 23

to rely on were once discarded waste products from oil refining, proving that the human race will continue to innovate – because that's what we do.

While there is risk in producing every type of energy, the risks of using fossil fuels are greatly exaggerated; the benefits rarely mentioned. The well-funded, well-connected environmental lobby has an ideological, knee-jerk reaction to energy. In their world, fossil fuels = bad, alternative energy = good.

Massachusetts State Senator, Kathleen O'Connor Ives plans to introduce legislation to ban the practice of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in Massachusetts. While carrying some hypothetical risk, fracking has the phenomenal ability to make America energy independent. Lower energy costs make us all richer, and we are sending billions less to our oil producing enemies – who, as we speak, are plotting our demise.

I know Senator Ives to be a reasonable legislator, and I'm hoping she and others will consider the pros and cons of every energy source at our disposal. In our quest for energy alternatives, facts should trump ideology. The earth and all its inhabitants deserve nothing less.

Christine Morabito is a resident of Haverhill and former President of the Greater Boston Tea Party. You can email her at christine.morabito@hotmail.com

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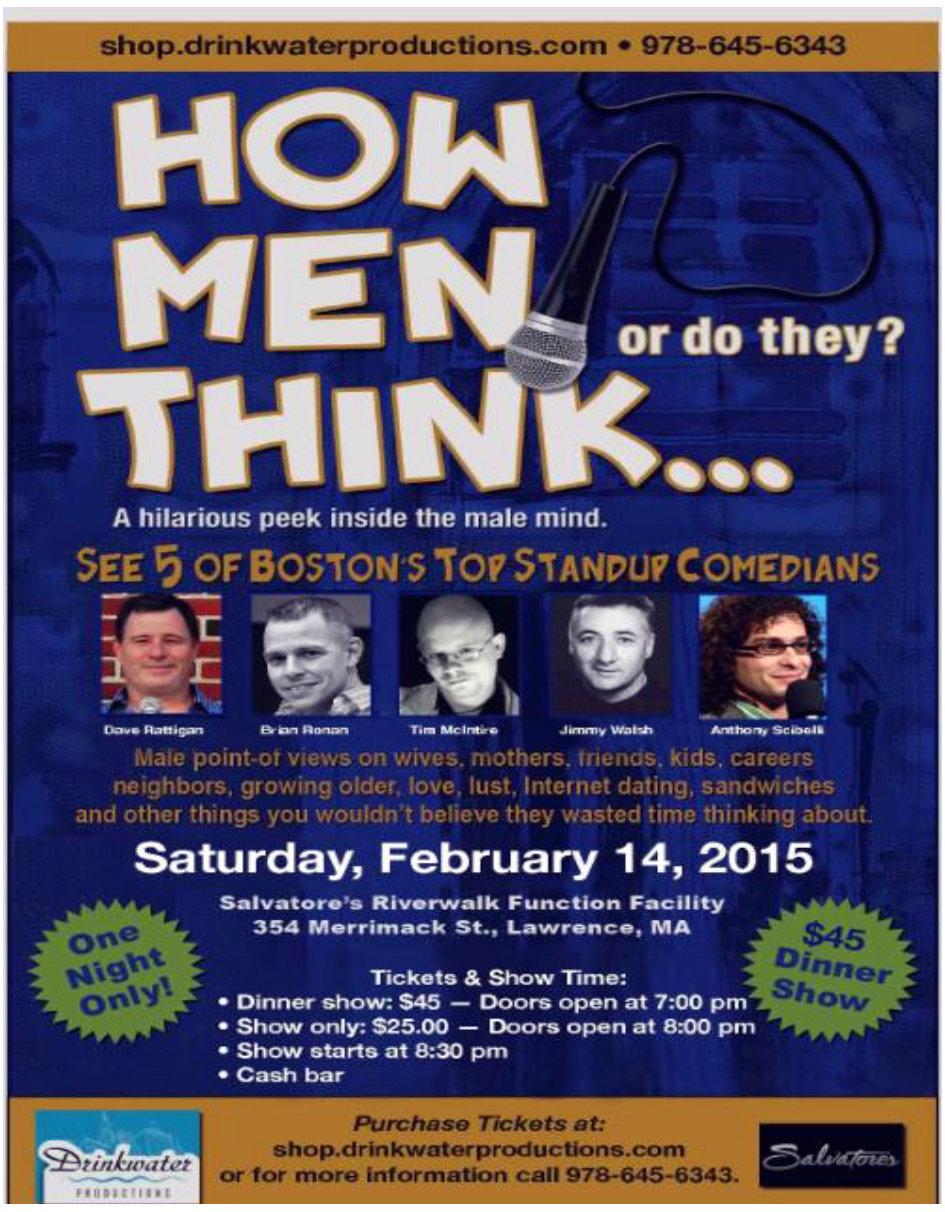
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Cultural Organization of Lowell (COOL) announces The COOL Street Team!

The COOL Street Team wants to tell you what's hot in Lowell, and they're hoping you'll tell your friends! The Street Team is a new pilot program being developed by the Cultural Organization of Lowell (COOL), to engage younger audiences in Lowell's cultural scene. Team members Sam DeAngelo, Melissa Kiessling, and Ben Raymond are all currently enrolled or recently graduated from UMass Lowell and they've been hired to attend local arts & cultural events and use social media to talk about their experience. Along with team founder Anne Marie Wetzonis, the team has received training from Lowell experts Danielle McFadden of the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce and Tory Germann, a photographer for HOWL, on how to write and photograph for social media. They then met with Merrimack Repertory Theatre (MRT) Executive Director Elizabeth Kegley and Merrimack Valley artist Rhoda Rosenberg to learn how to talk about art and theater--especially when you don't understand it. Under the general direction of COOL's staff, team members will assist in the promotion of city-wide events in Lowell, aiming specifically to target a younger audience by means of social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

The COOL Street Team will be out and about visiting a wide variety of venues. The Team has already attended a play at the MRT, promoted upcoming cultural activity at UMass Lowell's Homecoming, enjoyed pop-up events at Western Avenue Studios and Mill No. 5, visited gallery openings at the Brush, the Loading Dock Gallery, Ayer Lofts Gallery, ALL Gallery, and more, as well as having attended musical events at the Back Page and 119 Gallery. Team members will tell their followers how easy it is to get to these locations by foot, bus, or car, and that these events are affordable for young people working with a limited budget.

COOL Director Susan Halter says, "We are very excited to introduce this pilot program. Building the next-generation audience for the arts is a critical need across the industry. These kids are being involved in every aspect of this program, from setting goals, to designing a comprehensive schedule that they think will appeal to a younger audience. They are a fantastic group who really want to be involved in promoting Lowell."

For more information on the COOL Street Team, including their blog and where to follow them on social media, visithttp://www.cultureiscool.org/cool-street-team. ; If you would like the COOL Street Team to help promote your local event, contact Liz Stewart at estewart@lowellma.gov or call 978-674-4260.

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TV TALK WITH BILL CUSHING

Bill's TV Talk Mailbag

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

From time to time, my column will feature questions asked by readers regarding the world of TV. Feel free to email me with any questions you may have about TV at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com, and I'll do my best to answer you and may feature your question in a future column. Here's what we got!

Hi Bill. I love your column every month. I've become a big fan of Scorpion on CBS. Can you tell me anything about what's coming up on that show? – Samantha from Dracut, MA.

Thanks for the kind words Samantha. I do have some scoop on Scorpion, as a matter of fact. Have you ever wondered how Walter got to know the rest of the group? Well wonder no more. The origins of Scorpion will be the subject of an upcoming episode. The episode will take place entirely in the past and will show us how the team met each other for the first time and how Scorpion came to be.

Any scoop you can give me on Ray Donovan's upcoming 3rd season? – Paul from Tewksbury, MA

I can tell you that Katie Holmes and Ian McShane have joined the cast for season 3. They will both be appearing in a season long storyline. Holmes will be playing a businesswoman and daughter of a billionaire producer played by McShane. Holmes character needs to enlist Ray's fixer services. Ray Donovan will return to Showtime this summer.

I think the best show on TV is The Americans. I'm dying for some news about it. Anything you can tell me? – Amy from Salem, NH

I happen to agree with you Amy, The Americans has become TV's best drama. Executive Producer Joel Fields recently talked about the upcoming season and said, "What do you do when you love your spouse and yet you find you disagree on the most important, fundamental thing in your lives?" That question will be the main focus of season 3. Philip and Elizabeth will find the happiness they worked so hard on last season is all of a sudden on shaky ground as they disagree on the direction to take with their daughter Paige. Elizabeth wants to slowly phase her into the family business and begins to spend more time with Paige at her church group. Philip, on the other hand, tries to buy his way into Paige's heart. Meanwhile Paige grows more and more suspicious, and she just might have some plans of her own. The Americans 3rd season premiered on January 28th on FX.

Someone told me that NBC is bringing back Heroes. Is that true? What can you tell me about it? – Tim from Lowell, MA

It is true Tim. NBC is producing a 13 episode continuation of Heroes, which ran from 2006-2010. So far, the show has announced 2 cast members. 'Chuck' star Zachary Levi has been cast as the lead, and Jack Coleman, who played Noah Bennett in the original series, will be returning. NBC President Jennifer Salke also said that it is quite possible that other members from the original series cast will be returning. The series will occur after the events in season 4 and feature mostly new characters. Heroes: Reborn is expected to premiere sometime in the summer or fall of 2015.

I'm a huge fan of The Following. I need some season 3 scoop please!! – Julie from Manchester, NH

Season 3 of FOX's The Following will pick up a whole year after the events in the season 2 finale. Ryan, Max, Weston, and Gina are all back together. In fact, they reunite in the premiere because one of the characters is getting married. Ryan has moved on from Claire and is working with the FBI again, while Joe Carroll is locked up on death row. This season Ryan will have not just one bad guy to deal with, he'll be dealing with several threats. Meanwhile Weston is still looking for revenge; remember that one of the twins is still out there. Series star Kevin Bacon said, "The first two seasons were in some ways one chapter, the Joe chapter, and then starting in season 3, we're starting a new chapter."

Do you have any questions about TV? Email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future column.

Follow Bill on Twitter @TVNewsandNotes and on Facebook at TVNewsandNotes for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion.

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TEEN: FROM PAGE 24

of a child born with Down's Syndrome than one born healthy? A supporter of life would see an extra chromosome as an extra motivation to love and nothing more.

I don't write these things to express hatred towards those with different beliefs, or those who have found themselves in sticky situations. On the contrary, my only wish is to convey hope to anyone willing to accept. I realize that life doesn't always come when expected or necessarily when desired, but I can assure you that it does come for a reason.

I am confident in this because I know the creator of every living masterpiece. I know Him because He is also yours and mine. And He says, "Life is always an option."

HAJJAR: FROM PAGE 24

or your business. Stores like Staples, CVS, Rite Aid and BJ's all have cash back reward systems where if you buy a certain item, they will give you cash back for that item. If you couple that with a sale on that item and a coupon, you have struck gold. Check out the rewards programs at your favorite stores and learn how you can save big bucks on items you buy everyday.

6. Buy Used Equipment: If you are a brick and mortar business, you are probably going to need equipment. Why buy new when you can find older items for less? Craig's List, Ebay and Amazon are great discount sites to look for "gently used" office equipment, shelving, or even pizza ovens. You are also saving the environment by using refurbished items. Leave the fancy swivel chairs for when the big bucks are rolling in.

7. Squeezed For Time? Hire An Intern: Its not rocket science to know that when you own your own business, it's a full time job plus a full time job. There are millions of college students and recent graduates who are willing to work for little money or even free to get the experience. You are able to delegate some duties that you either may not have time to get to at the end of the day, or quite simply do not want to do. For example, having a marketing intern who has a pulse on what the latest trends are in social media could be a great way to get some of your marketing needs done for free.

8. Outsourcing: In a perfect world, everything could be made and done in America, but the reality is, especially for startups, it's just not a realistic statement. Outsourcing things like web design, SEO and even data entry can greatly reduce your overhead. Sites like ODesk, Elance and Supreme Outsourcing will work for your company around the globe. If you can reduce some of these costs, you are able to hire more full time people here. Your company is founded in America; so don't fret too much about it.

9. Credit Cards with Rewards: When choosing a business credit card, take advantage of a card that gives you reward points back for purchases. Chase Ink has a great sign on bonus: earn 50,000 in bonus points when you spend $5,000 on business supplies. That's $625 towards flights! Not bad at all. Others are Citi and American Express who offer in between 1-5% on various purchases plus different airfare and travel deals.

10. Become A Social Media Expert: Make it your New Years Resolution to become great at social media. If you don't have one already, start a business Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter page. The best businesses monitor their social media accounts frequently. Social media is free and it keeps you in control of creating your own content. Creating contests, posting questions and initiating discussions are all great ways to keep your audience engaged in your product or services. The days of spending thousands on a billboard sign and direct mail campaigns to drive people to buy your products are so over.

From credit card rewards to hiring interns, there are plenty of ways to save money in the bootstrapping days of your business. Creating a lean financial forecast is a mindset, not a complicated road map.

SUPERHEROES: FROM PAGE 12

rob anyone of another birthday.

Methuen's Relay For Life will take place on Saturday, May 30, 2015 from 12pm-6am at the Methuen High School Track (located on 1 Ranger Road, Methuen, MA, 01844). If you've never been involved with Relay or been to an event, here's a general rundown of what goes on:

Teams of 10 (or more) people walk or run around the MHS track in an overnight, non-competitive relay. The teams can be made up of people representing major corporations, local businesses, communities, families and/or friends. Each team is given a grassy, marked campsite in the middle of the track. Individually, the teams set up and decorate their campsites to reflect the theme of their team and their mission. Teams also pitch tents just in case some team members need sleep or some shelter from the weather to rest under. The weather is always unpredictable but Relay takes place regardless, rain or shine. This event occurs overnight as it represents that cancer never sleeps.

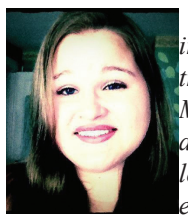
Team members are asked to pay a registration fee of $10 at sign up. Each team member is then asked to raise a minimum of $100 in pledges. All of the money that is raised goes directly to The American Cancer Society (ACS). ACS then uses the money to provide information about cancer at their local offices and also allows them to offer emotional and practical support programs for people living with cancer. Your donations also aid in the following programs:

- Help pay for lodging at an American Cancer Society Hope Lodge®. Last year, nearly 38,000 patients and caregivers stayed at a Hope Lodge facility.
- Help cancer patients get to treatment and back home again through the Road To Recovery® program. The American Cancer Society helped more than 15,000 patients to and from treatment last year.
- Support Reach To Recovery volunteers as they visit newly diagnosed breast cancer patients.
- Cover the cost of providing information to those facing cancer. Every day, more than 2,200 people call the American Cancer Society for help and information.
- Help guide patients through their cancer journey through the American Cancer Society Patient Navigator Program.
- Fund groundbreaking research and new clinical trials.

To start the Relay, the cancer survivors walk the first lap - The Survivors' Victory Lap. By doing this as a community, we celebrate their courage in the struggle of their battle with cancer. After the survivors walk, the first lap begins. The first lap is where everyone joins in. This lap symbolizes that Relay For Life has officially begun.

When the sun goes down, Luminaria bags filled with sand to hold them down, and a candle are placed around the track ever so gently. The paper bags are decorated and labeled with the name of a loved one who has either survived cancer or lost their life to the disease. At night when it gets dark out, the luminaries are lit and an emotional lap of silence takes place. The luminaries provide light and inspiration throughout the night while the relay continues until the early morning hours.

Cancer has touched the lives of many people and in my opinion Relay For Life is a great community event for anyone that has been touched by cancer in some way to be involved in. I strongly encourage everyone to get involved and I wish Methuen the best of luck in their efforts. Go Rangers!



Morgan Murphy is an intern at The Valley Patriot, a 2014 graduate of Methuen High School and a freshman at Lasalle College in Boston. You can email her at morganmurphy06@gmail.com,

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SHEILA'S RECIPE CORNER

SHEILA MULLINS
VALLEY PATRIOT RECIPE COLUMNIST

Aaaah. February…Valentine's Day… Dinner. It's been years since we've been out for a Valentine's Day dinner. Not because of Jerry, but because of me! It's SO crowded, overpriced, & frankly, the last time we were out for dinner on Valentine's Day the food was mediocre (& it was a NICE restaurant!) & the noise level was crazy. How crazy, we had to nearly shout to converse! Some romantic dinner! So, why not make a delicious, fast dinner at home, where it's quiet (hopefully!), one that's full of flavor, & leaves lots of time…

CLAMS, SHRIMP, & LUNGUICA w. TOMATOES & PASTA

4 oz. linguiça sliced, each slice then quartered
2 T vegetable or olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 T cilantro or parsley, chopped
¾ t hot pepper sauce, or to taste
18 dozen little neck or other small hard shell clams
1/3 c dry white wine
1-14 oz. can diced tomatoes
½ t salt
¼ t freshly ground black pepper
8 oz. medium shrimp, uncooked*
2 T green pepper, chopped
8 oz. angel hair pasta, cooked according to package directions

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium high. Add sausage, pepper, & onion. Cook until brown, about 3-4 minutes, stirring often. Add canned tomatoes with its juice, clams, salt, pepper, hot pepper sauce, & wine. Bring pan to a simmer & then cover. Simmer for 5-10 minutes or until clams open. (Time varies depending upon the size of the clams. Discard any clams that do not open.) Remove & reserve clams. Bring broth to a boil & add shrimp. Cook uncovered for 3 minutes or until shrimp are cooked.

Place pasta on plate or preferably, shallow bowls, add clams, ladle or pour sauce over. Top with cilantro. Serve with good crusty bread & a salad for a fast & tasty meal! Serves 4. Prep time: 5 minutes. Cook time about 20 minutes. A side note: the leftovers are fantastic!

* I had so much commentary about the shells that I felt compelled to share the conversation with you. The way I have it here, one removes the shrimp from the shell at the table. One can remove the shell & keep the tail on for presentation purposes. One can completely remove the shell & just leave the shrimp for "neater" eating. I left the shell on because the shell brings a lot of flavour to the plate. Another way to accomplish that is to remove the shells, place in a piece of cheesecloth & tie

closed & remove the cheesecloth prior to serving. What option you choose is simply up to you.

I'm always thinking about foods that can do double duty: brunch or lunch, brunch or appetizer, you get the idea. This is meaty enough to work as an appetizer, as lunch, or heck, as a light dinner. This is another fast prepare with a bit of cook time. What I really strive for, by & large, is simple food that respects the food, isn't overly complicated, & has outstanding taste. I think I got it all right here & from the speed at which our friends devoured these, that's my story & I'm sticking to it! Let me know what you think.

PORTOBELLO FILLED ZUCCHINI BOATS

2 smaller zucchini
1 large garlic clove, minced
1 large Portobello, stemmed & gills removed
3 T diced onion
1 t each fresh marjoram & thyme
½ t salt
¼ t freshly ground black pepper
1/3 c grated gruyère
1 T olive oil

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9" x 13" pan with oil. Preheat a sauté pan on medium high & add olive oil.

Trim ends off zucchini slice lengthwise. Scoop out insides leaving a ¼ thick shell. Rough chop the zucchini that has been removed. Rough chop the Portobello mushroom. Add all ingredients except cheese to the sauté pan & sauté about 4 minutes or until onion is translucent. Stir occasionally.

Transfer contents to a food processor & process until barely chunky. Fill each zucchini half with the filling. Top with the gruyère. Place in prepared pan & bake for 25 minutes. If you would like the cheese browned, finish under the broiler for 2 minutes or so. Slice & enjoy! Serves 4 as an appetizer. Image

Recipes are created by Sheila Mullins & taste tested by Jerry & Sheila Mullins & sometimes friends & family. Sheila lives in Newburyport & is an interior designer & a personal cook. She can be reached at Sheila_A_Mullins@hotmail.com & she looks forward to hearing from you.

Recipes are created by Sheila Mullins & taste tested by Jerry & Sheila Mullins. Sheila lives in Newburyport & is a personal cook, among other things. She can be reached at Sheila_A_Mullins@hotmail.com & she looks forward to hearing from you.

Don't Miss The Valley Patriot's11th Anniversary BASH
March 20th at the Firefighter's Relief In, in Lawrence

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Beware of Unofficial or Illegal Pet Care Businesses

Tracey Zysk
VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

School vacations are approaching. As you start planning your trips, you begin to look into pet care options for your pets. You start strolling through Facebook and see sponsored ads for Dogvacy.com, Care.com and a few other sites. All claiming they can help you with your pet care needs. Sounds interesting, peeks your interest. You visit their websites. You say to yourself: Wow, professional looking website, well written presentations, looks legit, and then you fall into the trap. You click, you sign up, you pay a fee and you find a pet care provider. You tell yourself, "That was simple...task done." But guess what? .... not necessarily.

Are you really educated on what Dogvacy.com, Care.com and these other site are all about? Well, considering these sites currently have several lawsuits against them, it seems like the truth is finally coming to the forefront.

The companies hosting these sites are registered businesses. But the problem is, the people offering pet care services on the sites may not be actual pet care businesses or even have any credentials to take care of animals. Why can these sites present that to an average consumer? Because they are not advertising that the content of the people providing their services have been verified. These companies' business models are based on offering the general public options to a resource of people that "claim" they are pet care providers.

These sites expect you to do all the background work. They just offer you the name of a person with a cute bio and contact information.

That is the biggest disconnect. You as the average pet care owner wouldn't know that. In fact, you probably haven't even thought of it. You just assumed that the people listed on these sites must be the "real deal". Why would you think any differently? You subconsciously made that assumption. Unfortunately, Dogvacay.com and Care.com are aware that is how you think, and they tapped into that.

Department of Agriculture in states all across the country is in an uproar over the misrepresentation of these sites.

Also, several Attorney General departments have started their own investigations. Why? Well there have been numerous instances of people on these sites stealing animals, not caring for animals properly, stealing from the clients' homes, not paying for their town licenses or not having any insurance. Not to mention the unfortunate cases of animal abuse that have been reported.

Buyer Beware! Even for a pet care service.

Play it safe. An actual pet care provider will offer the following

1. Insured.
2. Bonded.
3. Registered business with their town.
4. CPR/Animal First Aid certified.
5. Criminal Background checked.

If a person is offering in-home boarding, he will be able to provide all that is listed above plus a kennel license provided by the town.

If you choose to go to someone that can't provide documentation, and god forbid something happens to your pet, you will have little to no recourse.

For the safety of your pet, please take the time and do your research.

** A great place to start your search for a pet care provider is www.petsit.com

Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been featured on local radio, TV and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units and National Award winner of the Platinum PAW award. Tracey may be reached at wigglewalk@comcast.net. Become a fan on Facebook at Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care

Reader Takes Issue with Valley Patriot Columnist

Tennis Lilly
READER SUBMISSION

Christine Morabito's November article in The Valley Patriot (http://valleypatriot.com/in-global-warming-battle-truth-is-the-biggest-casualty/) would have us believe that man-made global warming is a hoax, or at best an exaggeration being used by mysterious forces to compel economic and social change. Among Ms. Morabito's claims, all offered with little or no evidence, are:

• Scientists who doubt the AGW narrative are under constant threat and intimidation to conform but they are now coming out of the woodwork to challenge the hoax.

• The concern about AGW isn't about science, its actually all driven by "big green" the "Group of Ten" environmental groups who wield enormous power and influence. They are whipping up baseless fear to keep their coffers full jus like the scientists who are getting rich of government grant money.

• Oh, and Al Gore allegedly got a D in a science class in college …. that makes him wrong apparently.

• CO2 is a "trace gas" (as if that's relevant to the greenhouse effect).

• Because CO2 levels lag behind historic temperature increases, it can't effect climate.

• Environmentalists intentionally started calling global warming "climate change".

• The IPCC report of global warming cant be trusted.

• While climate researchers cant be trusted, a handful of dissenters, some who have never actually researched global warming should be.

• Peer review cant be trusted because… well she never really explains why.

The question of whether global warming is happening, whether human activity is the primary cause and whether its likely impacts pose a risk to human life and well being are all questions that have answers, answers that are provided by science.

The key components of AGW theory, simply stated are that 1. Human activity is adding significant amounts of greenhouse gases (GHG), chiefly CO2 and Methane, to the atmosphere, 2. This increase in GHG concentrations traps more infrared radiation and that, 3. This additional energy is warming the earth's climate in ways that are noticeable and cannot be explained by other "forcing" on the climate. These three key ideas are, without question, all proven. There are many other components to AGW and there is debate over the range of impacts that warming will have. The public policy debate, one that many activist organizations and think tanks, both on the right and the left are actively engaged in, is an important one. The problem here is that getting to the "what do we do about it" part of the conversation is still mired down by an active and well-funded campaign to confuse people and mischaracterize the nature of uncertainty and risk. It's a campaign that takes its strategy and key players from the tobacco industry playbook.

The temperature of the earth isn't something that is "set", like a thermostat. The planet isn't "supposed" to be a certain temperature, the climate we enjoy is the result of a balance between energy coming in from the sun and energy leaving the planet. This radiative balance is determined largely by how much energy in the form of long wave radiation is retained. The only reason why the earth isn't a frozen ball of ice is the presence of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane. These gases, in trace amounts trap enough infrared radiation to warm the earth surface, helping to release water vapor that traps additional heat and raise the temperature of the planet. The science behind this is so well established that its beyond question.

The discovery of the greenhouse effect is over 100 years old. As early as the 1950's scientists realized that adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere would trap more heat in the climate and raise the earths temperature, long before any environmental group or Al Gore expressed concern about global warming. While some climate researchers expressed concern about the cooling effect of particulate pollution in the 1970's, clean air regulation already started to address particulates and most researchers realized that increased greenhouse gas levels would eventually overwhelm the cooling effect of pollution. In 1989, James Hanson testified before congress and a young Al Gore who, despite earning a C in one science class displayed a keen interest in, and grasp of the potential threat of global warming. As time would bear out, Hanson's model projections, crude as they were turned out to be accurate (http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2007/05/hansens-1988-projections/

Since the first peer reviewed research on global warming was published in the journal Tellus in the 1950's, literally tens of thousands of peer-reviewed studies have been produced. None of this research has anything to do with "Big Green", Al Gore, or some nefarious plot to destroy capitalism. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has created in 1988 to evaluate the published science and produce comprehensive reports every 5 years to advise the public and policy makers on the state of climate science. While some readers may reflexively scoff at anything associated with the UN, the IPCC assessments represent the most thoroughly reviewed and vetted documents human science has ever produced. What is noticeable about the IPCC reports is how measured, even-handed and candid they are. You will find little hysteria in the pages of the IPCC reports (http://ipcc.ch/), read them yourself.

Human industrial activity is altering the climate that every living being on this planet relies on for survival. There is no reason to think these changes will be benign or that adapting to them will be inexpensive. While industrialized wealthy nations will be able to adapt (at great expense), most of the world will suffer and the likely cost in dollars and human lives will be enormous. We can make the choice to confront this existential threat or we can ignore it. The public policy debate we must have over this issue is not well served by denialism and baseless conspiracy theories.

More resources:

There is a consensus, and is has nothing to do with Al Gore or the UN or "Big Green":

http://scienceprogress.org/2012/11/27479/

Dr. Naomi Oreskes gives a comprehensive presentation on the history of climate change research and the concerted effort to confuse the public:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNPRgR-2o-A

An excellent report on the likely impacts of climate change on the U.S. :

http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/

Questions about climate science? Think this is all a hoax? Skeptical Science is an award wining science blog that cites peer reviewed research:

http://www.skepticalscience.com/

NH: FROM PAGE 18

Hampshirites not always the candidate with the most money who wins, which is a rarity in politics. For example, in 2000, Arizona Senator John McCain had significantly less name recognition and was vastly outspent by Texas Governor George W. Bush. However, McCain took to retail campaigning like a fish in water. He traveled the state in a camper and held hundreds of town hall meetings, which allowed him to meet voters directly. The result – McCain trounced Bush 49% to 30%. While Bush ultimately won the nomination, it set McCain on the path to future national prominence.

Finally, unlike most other states, New Hampshire permits voters that have not declared their party affiliation to vote in a party's primary. Of our more than 767,000 voters, almost 313,000 (41%) are registered as "undeclared" and are free to participate in either party's primary. This gives an early measurement of the national attitude and inclination of independent voters toward the candidates. Independent voters are the deciding voters in presidential campaigns.

In 1968, Lyndon Johnson's presidency was ended when liberal and independent voters gave Eugene McCarthy 42% of the vote against the incumbent president. It was clear that the national mood and the key-voting bloc had soured on Johnson and his Vietnam policy. Johnson announced he would not run for another term shortly thereafter.

In today's climate, there is much that is wrong with politics. New Hampshire serves as the last bastion to a time when campaigns were substantive and genuine. New Hampshire has earned its place in the presidential process and throughout history has proven its worth. That is why New Hampshire must always remain first.

D.J. Bettencourt served as a State Representative in the New Hampshire House of Representatives from 2005 to 2012 and was the House Majority Leader for the 2011-2012 legislative term. He currently works as the Director of Development and Community Relations at the Salem Animal Rescue League and serves on the Economic Development Action Committee in Salem, NH.

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NOTEBOOK: FROM 15

eating these foods and others react poorly without even knowing it! Learn how they impact your health and weight management. Healthy breakfast will be served.

ADDISON GALLERY OF ART: ART OF THE DAY - Wednesday, February 11th at 1:30pm Private tour of the exhibition "Light/Dark, White/Black" which showcases a wide range of aesthetic and symbolic functions of black and white in modern and contemporary American art, both as light and color. Meet in the gallery lobby after pre-registration here.

MEN'S BREAKFAST - Friday, February 13th at 8:30am. $4. Bill Fahey, Director of Andover Youth Services will discuss the new youth services building. Learn about its design, functions and goals for the youth and community.

EASTERN U.S. DANCESPORT COMPETITION, BOSTON - Friday, February 20th from 8:30am to 3:30pm includes admission and lunch. Witness the preliminary rounds of this Dancing With The Stars type ball room dancing competition. Enjoy flashy gowns and formal wear with all styles of dancing.

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST - Wednesday, February 25th at 9am. Complimentary breakfast, refreshments and conversation. It's a great time to see what is happening at the Center!

YOUR PASSPORT TO THE WORLD: EARTHWATCH - Thursday, February 26th at 1:30pm. $3 includes dessert and coffee. Join us for a virtual trip around the world as we enjoy the experiences of travelers who have spanned the globe. Jack Holmes, professional photographer and his wife, Meg, joined an international research team in the spectacular Norwegian Arctic investigating behaviors and needs of whales and dolphins.

CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION - Friday, February 27th at 12p.m. $9. Tickets went on sale February 1st. Limit 2 tickets per person. Celebrate Chinese New Year with a Chinese luncheon followed by a performance at 1pm Our Chinese neighbors will help us celebrate this New Year's holiday with a wonderful meal, as well as authentic music and dance.

MEMORIAL HALL LIBRARY COMES TO THE CENTER - Stream and Download: Monday, February 23rd at 1:30pm Music, movies, TV shows and audio books: an overview of Hoopla Digital, IndieFlix and Freegal Music services available through the library.

Pre-registration required for all events and space is limited. Open to entire community, pending space. Call for information: 978-623-8321. Or visit www.andoverseniorcenter.org for our complete listings.

FAKE CHARITIES AMONG THE IRS "DIRTY DOZEN" LIST OF TAX SCAMS FOR 2015

The Internal Revenue Service today warned taxpayers about groups masquerading as a charitable organization to attract donations from unsuspecting contributors, one of the "Dirty Dozen" for the 2015 filing season.

"When making a donation, taxpayers should take a few extra minutes to ensure their hard-earned money goes to legitimate and currently eligible charities," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "IRS.gov has the tools taxpayers need to check out the status of charitable organizations."

Compiled annually, the "Dirty Dozen" lists a variety of common scams that taxpayers may encounter anytime, but many of these schemes peak during filing season as people prepare their returns or hire someone to prepare their taxes.

Illegal scams can lead to significant penalties and interest and possible criminal prosecution. IRS Criminal Investigation works closely with the Department of Justice to shut down scams and prosecute the criminals behind them.

The IRS offers these basic tips to taxpayers making charitable donations:

Be wary of charities with names that are similar to familiar or nationally known organizations. Some phony charities use names or websites that sound or look like those of respected, legitimate organizations. IRS.gov has a search feature, Exempt Organizations Select Check, which allows people to find legitimate, qualified charities to which donations may be tax-deductible.

Don't give out personal financial information, such as Social Security numbers or passwords to anyone who solicits a contribution from you. Scam artists may use this information to steal your identity and money. People use credit card numbers to make legitimate donations but please be very careful when you are speaking with someone who called you.

Don't give or send cash. For security and tax record purposes, contribute by check or credit card or another way that provides documentation of the gift.

Call the IRS toll-free disaster assistance telephone number (1-866-562-5227) if you are a disaster victim with specific questions about tax relief or disaster related tax issues.

Impersonation of Charitable Organizations. Another long-standing type of abuse or fraud involves scams that occur in the wake of significant natural disasters.

Following major disasters, it's common for scam artists to impersonate charities to get money or private information from well-intentioned taxpayers. Scam artists can use a variety of tactics. Some scammers operating bogus charities may contact people by telephone or email to solicit money or financial information. They may even directly contact disaster victims and claim to be working for or on behalf of the IRS to help the victims file casualty loss claims and get tax refunds.

They may attempt to get personal financial information or Social Security numbers that can be used to steal the victims' identities or financial resources. Bogus websites may solicit funds for disaster victims. To help disaster victims, the IRS encourages taxpayers to donate to recognized charities.

Tom Duggan is president and publisher of The Valley Patriot Newspaper in North Andover Massachusetts, a #1 Best Selling Author, Host of the Paying Attention Radio Program on 980WCAP in Lowell, lectures on media bias and police issues, a former Lawrence School Committeeman, former political director for Mass. Citizens Alliance, and a 1990 Police Survivor. You can email your comments to valleypatriot@aol.com.

WRESTLING IN ANDOVER

Anne Knowles
VALLEY PATRIOT ANDOVER COLUMNIST

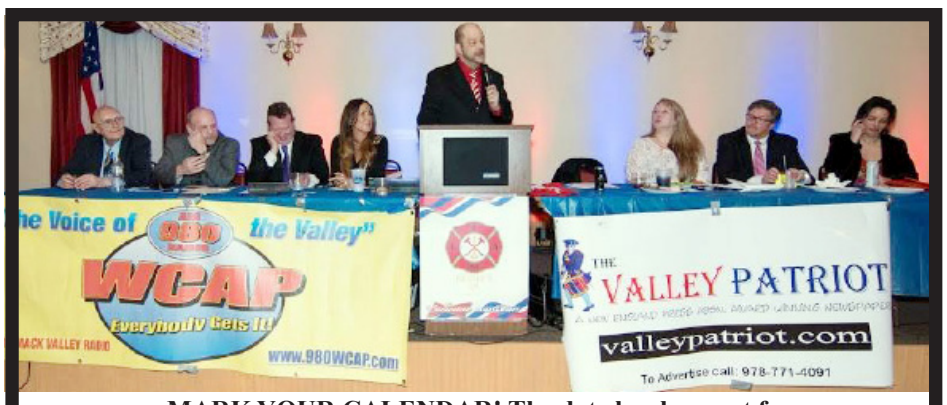
The Golden Warriors of Andover High School wrestling team is an exceptional group of young people. Being a part of the Wrestling team is a dedication that will stay with them for many years to come. Booster, Paul Marcotte, said that he was totally impressed with the sport when his oldest son joined the team. He said that the self-discipline required, though hard and difficult, encourages mental toughness and a confident attitude that carries a person throughout their life.

Wrestling is one of the oldest sports in the world. Since beginnings of recorded time, the sport was depicted in cave drawings, as well as ancient coins, etc. It has been popular in many cultures throughout the ancient world to modern times.

Coach Brian Caldwell and Assistant Coaches Neal Callahan and Jake Pilla, devote many hours of skilled instruction for the team. The team has a "family" orientation where they share in the triumph of every win, as well as the loses.

Wrestling is a sport where anyone can "do it". Size is not an issue as opponents are based on weight. The sport is open to both male and female student-contestants. Requirements are a willingness to dedicate time and discipline to the sport.

Andover High School is a member of the Merrimack Valley Conference. Meets are scheduled throughout the area during the winter season. Interested students and parents are invited to attend the open meets. Schedules are listed through the High School. You are cordially invited to become part of the Andover High School Wrestling Team Booters.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR! The date has been set for THE VALLEY PATRIOT'S 11th ANNIVERSARY BASH March 20th at the Firefighter's Relief In at 6:30PM

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American Legion Notes for the New Year

John Lenotte
VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

John Lenotte is the recipient of the 2012 Valley Patriot Hero of the Year Award and is Commander of the Wilbur M. Comeau Post 4, Haverhill MA; Past Department Commander, of Massachusetts The American Legion; contact: JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

As we get to shoveling out from yet another snow storm, did you check on a neighbor, friend or family member to see if they were all right?

Maybe you knocked on their door or at least made a phone call to them.

Or maybe you hoped that someone would check in on you, just to hear a voice of someone who cares about you. Now think about our troops who are stationed around the world and have family and friends who they cannot physically go to their assistance.

Some might not even be able to reach out by phone, email or internet because of the location where the service member is stationed. While they are protecting our lives and freedoms, we need to take care of their families.

I hope you will check on your family and friends and those of our troops.

February is the month when The American Legion will hold its annual Washington Conference. Members of the Legion from all over the nation will converge on our nation's capital.

They will be briefed on major concerns that the Washington Legion Staff feels will be acted upon in this session of Congress.

Many will then meet with their Congressional Representative/Senator or a legislative staff member.

Some members of the Legion family will also observe the National Commander of The American Legion give testimony to a meeting of the Joint Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees.

And I will note that they do not ask for just the members of the Legion to receive benefits, they are there advocating for ALL veterans as they have done since 1919.

Which is all great, but they need OUR support. This means reaching out to the local offices or the Washington office of our Congressional delegation. Our representatives gauge how much reaction they receive within their district. No, or little response, means no one cares. I care, do you? I will contact my Congressional Representative and 2 U.S. Senators, will you?

What are some of the concerns? Sequestration is still a major concern. Given the status of what is happening all around the world, is this the time to continue massive cuts to the Department of Defense? The Veterans Administration still has a way to go in correcting their methods of service delivery. Yes, many are getting better help but others still have problems getting appointments and/or having them constantly cancelled.

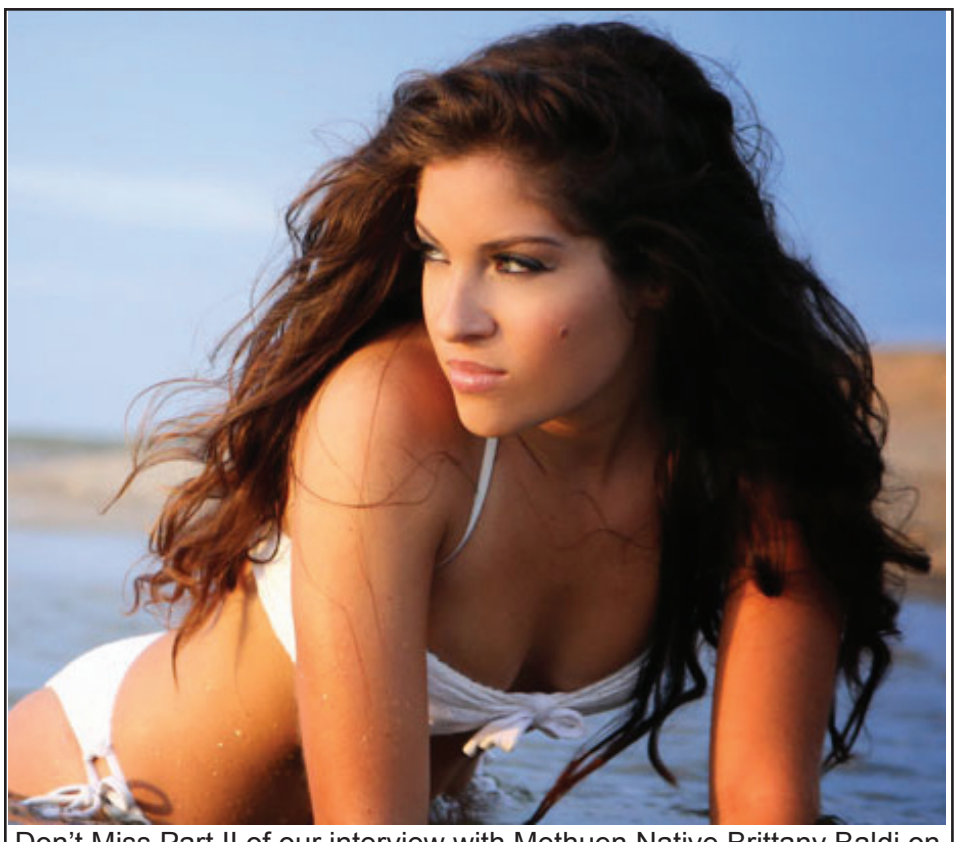
Claims and Claims Appeal processing is still far from where it needs to be. Our newest veterans are suffering from ailments that the VA continues to deny exist. It took decades for the VA to recognize Agent Orange as a medical problem. We must not let this happen to the current generation of veterans.

Credentialing of service members who are transitioning to a civilian career still face many obstacles. At this years Conference, The American Legion will again hold a summit bringing together veterans advocates, government agencies and major employers such as Microsoft, UPS, Boeing, Verizon, Monster.com, Amtrak, Time Warner and Bechtel Construction Services to facilitate credentialing. This issue has been brought to Congress since 1997. Some progress has been made but more needs to be done.

Additional information can be found at www.legion.org.

May God Bless our troops, their families and bring them home safe.

John Lenotte, Commander, Post 4 Haverhill and Past Department Commander, The American Legion, Department of Massachusetts.



Don't Miss Part II of our interview with Methuen Native Brittany Baldi on her new TV Series "The Challenge, Battle of the Exes II" on MTV.

DEEB: FROM PAGE 12

the High School accreditation process which many thought would not be successful because of renovation concerns and in turn was highly successful bringing the school to a new level of high standards. This followed the previous accreditation 10 years earlier with results not positive for MHS. Also during Jim's tenure the high school graduation rate has improved by 6 points." We wish Mr. Giuca well in his retirement from Methuen Schools.

Replacing Jim Giuca will not be easy. The Superintendent will be setting up a search/interview committee consisting of: 1 parent of a high school student, 1 school (MHS) site council member, 3 teachers, 2 administrators, 1 school committee member, and 1 community member.

I will be posting this position on School Spring at the end of this week. The goal is to have someone in place for July 1, 2015.

Finally, last month I wrote extensively regarding technological advances taking place in Methuen Schools. It should be noted that in December, the MHS Network Manager worked with a vendor to add a newer feature for high school photocopying machines – the ability to print documents from mobile devices and laptop computers. According to Director of Instructional Technology Ed Lussier, "Students will be able to send documents from their IPads to the photocopier in the MHS Media Center. Students can then go to the copier, enter a unique code, and their documents will print for them." Students will begin utilizing this feature at the end of January.

D.J. Deeb is a Methuen resident and member of the Methuen School Committee. Deeb is an Adjunct Professor of History/Government at Bunker Hill Community College and an Adjunct Political Science Instructor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He teaches Social Studies full-time at Reading Memorial High School. He is the author of Israel, Palestine, and the Quest for Middle East Peace (University Press, 2013) and The Collapse of Middle East Peace (IUniverse, 2003).

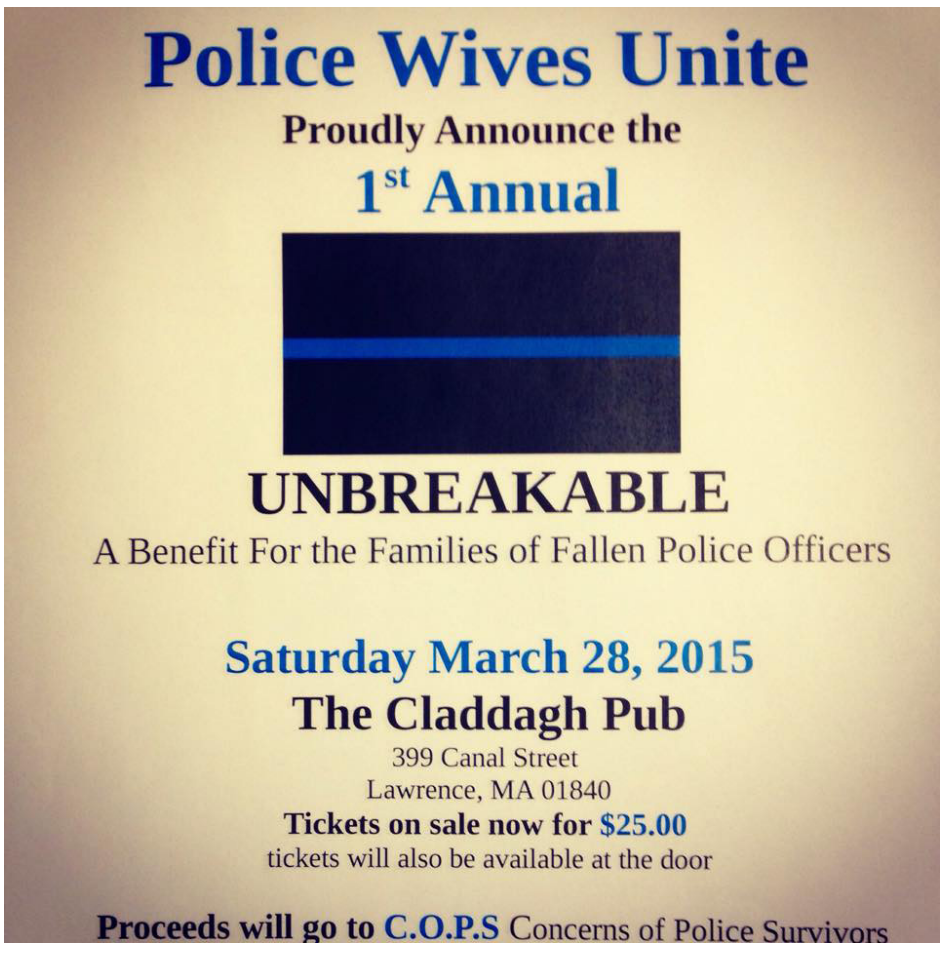
Dr. FRANK: FROM 21

living with PTSD."

Looking further into the subject, there is actual medical and psychiatric literature on the mental health benefits of motorcycling. I don't think that I need the literature to confirm what I already know, but I was actually pleasantly surprised that what I had figured out on my own has been the subject of serious academic study. Understand however that this is not a prescription. You have to make responsible decisions regarding your athletic ability and your tolerance for risk. Motorcycling can be dangerous and result in loss of life, sometimes having nothing to do with the skill and caution of the rider. What I am saying however, is in appreciation of the freedom that our veterans have purchased for us by their sacrifices, including consequences to their own mental health and well being, I applaud companies like Harley-Davidson, and the Wounded Warrior Project for the life saving and life altering support of our veterans.

Oh, and by the way, as an adult I continue to find it easier to ask forgiveness than to ask permission when I brought home my first cruiser. My compromise was that up-to-date life and disability insurance be taken care of, but it's all about good mental health to me!

Dr. MacMillan specializes in Gastroenterology and Liver disease and is a member of the North Andover Board of Health. He practices at Holy Family Hospital and currently serves as President of the Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association. Dr. MacMillan was recently reelected as Massachusetts Governor of the American College of Gastroenterology and is a Fellow of the College.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